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# General Assembly

Official Records

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New York

*President:* Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

**Address by Mr. Luis Angel González Macchi, President of the Republic of Paraguay**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Paraguay.

*Mr. Luis Angel González Macchi, President of the Republic of Paraguay, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Luis Angel González Macchi, the President of the Republic of Paraguay, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President González Macchi** (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I wish to express my thanks to the Assembly for having come to hear Paraguay's position. Secondly, I must apologize if I am interrupting your luncheon.

Let me begin my statement in this general debate by expressing my delegation's gratification at seeing you, Sir, preside over the work of this Assembly. Your personal and professional qualities will guarantee that our work is successful, and you may rely on the constant and resolute support of the Paraguayan delegation. We also wish to take this opportunity to express our thanks to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the report that he has presented on the work of our Organization, which confirms how essential this work is in the context of today's world. There is a need for all States members not simply to support that work, but also to make it even stronger and more flexible in responding to fresh challenges.

Allow me also to welcome and express my country's satisfaction at seeing the accession to this Organization of the Swiss Confederation, as well as the upcoming addition of Timor-Leste. With these new Members we take an important step forward towards achieving the universality to which the Organization aspires.

The events of the last year, some auspicious, others discouraging, have given us resounding proof of the role of the United Nations and the fact that the Organization's reform is now, more than ever before, a pressing and urgent challenge. I am thinking of the need for a thorough reform of its organs and structure, as well as of its functions, and of changes that would equip this Organization to respond more effectively to the fresh challenges that are emerging with unexpected speed on the international scene.

Who would have thought, when this Organization was founded more than 50 years ago, that at this current General Assembly session we would be extending a welcome in the United Nations to two new Member States: Switzerland, a State that has always held its place and played its role in history and on the international scene; and Timor-Leste, whose birth we witnessed just a few months ago, thanks to a large extent to United Nations intervention? Nor could we have imagined just a few decades ago that this year we would have witnessed one of the most important and

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anticipated events in the area of human rights — that is, the establishment of the International Criminal Court. Who would have thought that one year ago, on 11 September 2001, we would have been eyewitnesses to one of the most tragic and incomprehensible events in history — the history not only of the United States of America, but also of the whole of humankind — and that immediately thereafter the international community would unite and respond most decisively in combating international terrorism?

Those events show us that today's world is not the same as that of the Organization's founders. Among other reasons, they determine and require reform of our institution. That is why it is necessary that we give priority to the work of the United Nations, not only so that the Organization responds efficiently to political events, but also to ensure sustainable development so that its benefits reach every individual, wherever he may live, work and have a home.

Undoubtedly, a renewed and reorganized United Nations will ultimately respond to the well-being of every one of our citizens. The decisions that we take in that regard over the next months will define and guide our countries and humanity in the future. Thus we cannot limit ourselves to superficial or simply procedural actions; we must achieve a genuine transformation.

In that regard, we must reaffirm first of all the central role to be played by the General Assembly as the principal organ of the United Nations, since it is the most representative, democratic, universal and equitable deliberating organ. The Assembly should become the world's parliament, in which all countries — regardless of their size or position — can expound, debate, dissent, express their views and share positions on the most important current issues. It cannot continue to be the arena where we come to participate merely to carry out a routine function based on a pre-established and repetitive agenda, and in which our statements are mere rhetoric that is scarcely listened to by any other delegation. Therefore, we firmly support the process of revitalizing the Assembly, which should continue and should focus in that direction. The changes must be genuine and profound so as to enhance the Assembly's effectiveness and efficiency.

No reform of the United Nations will have the effect that we all wish for without the much-awaited reform of the Security Council. Until that body — responsible for maintaining international peace and security — is reformed, we will not be able to speak of an Organization that is in accord with the time in which we live. That is why we should expand both categories of members — permanent and non-permanent — and include both developed and developing countries, taking into particular account that the latter are currently under-represented in such an important body. At the same time, reform should include the gradual abolition of the right of veto for permanent members until it disappears, making the Council fairer and more democratic. We believe that the time has come to assume our political responsibility in the settlement of this matter.

One year after the tragic events of 11 September, we need to ask ourselves what implications they have had, as much for this Organization as for each country domestically. Paraguay took a firm position of condemning international terrorism, fully implementing the measures imposed by the Security Council and promoting the validity of the numerous relevant international agreements. My Government responded to the requirements of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), and to date it has presented two reports to the Committee established pursuant to that resolution. I here reaffirm our commitment to continue to cooperate with the Committee in its efforts, as we have been doing on the regional and subregional levels. Moreover, I should like to report that Paraguay, in keeping with its constitutional process, is becoming a party to the 12 international agreements on terrorism and was one of the first countries to sign the Inter-American Convention against Terrorism, adopted in the framework of the Organization of American States.

We firmly support the strengthening of an international legal basis for combating terrorism. That is why we hope that during this session of the General Assembly, negotiations on the comprehensive international convention against terrorism — a proposal presented by India — will be concluded, as well as the Russian Federation's proposal for an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

One achievement of far-reaching importance this year was the entry into force of the Statute of the International Criminal Court on 1 July, and we are gratified to be one of the first 66 countries whose ratification of the Rome Statute made this possible. We

are convinced that the Court will be a deterrent to unacceptable human rights abuses and crimes against humanity. Likewise, we are certain that the work of the Court will not be tarnished or manipulated by any political influence and that its independence, impartiality and purpose will be preserved. Paraguay appeals to all countries that have not yet signed or ratified the Statute to do so as soon as possible, since the Court's universality is fundamental to its effectiveness. My country has followed very closely the recent debate on the Court's competence to judge hypothetical offences, committed in the course of United Nations peacekeeping operations, in which personnel in the service of countries that have not signed or ratified the Statute might be involved.

We welcome the Secretary-General's appointment of the new High Commissioner for Human Rights. We are certain that, as a Latin American, he will do honour to that appointment, which was confirmed by the Assembly. We share his desire to build a human rights agenda that will not divide peoples and States, but rather unite them more. Paraguay will provide all the support necessary to ensure that his mission is successful.

For the first time, Paraguay will become a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, as of January 2003, and I should like to take this opportunity to reaffirm my Government's commitment to cooperate with and contribute to that body's important and altruistic work. We are prepared to work with the other members of the Commission as well as with other States and entities.

Today we face a complex world that is still far from forming a stable international order. We continue to witness confrontations in various regions of the world. That is why we must devote all our efforts and resources to the reconciliation of humanity. The Republic of Paraguay will always invoke and support the peaceful settlement of conflicts through dialogue, mutual understanding and international law.

In that regard, we see grounds for grave concern in the serious worsening of the situation in the Middle East: the spiral of violence, the alarming humanitarian situation and the violation of the fundamental rights of the civilian population as well as the loss of innocent lives among both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples.

We resolutely support the work of the "quartet" and of the international community in general in their efforts to secure a resumption of negotiations and thus bring about much-desired peace in the region. At the same time, as a country that abides strictly by international law, Paraguay regrets the fact that the resolutions adopted by the Security Council on this question this year, which contain clear terms and references, have still not been implemented by the parties.

Paraguay would underscore once again the urgent need to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions, especially 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), in order to pave the way for the peaceful coexistence of two independent States, Israel and Palestine, within secure and internationally recognized borders.

My country, Paraguay, has been following closely the situation in Afghanistan. We welcome the presence in this general debate of President Karzai, who deserves our recognition and our firm support in his efforts to fulfil his responsibilities and to carry out the tasks that lie ahead of him. The international community is committed to continuing to support Afghanistan so as to enable it to achieve the stability and development that its people so desire.

The Government of Paraguay, in keeping with the position it has been maintaining and expressing concerning the question of the Republic of China on Taiwan, would once again reaffirm its strong wish that this issue be considered within the framework of universality embodied in our Charter and on the basis of norms of international law, in order to achieve a satisfactory solution through dialogue among the parties concerned.

This year has been marked by important conferences. The World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid, the special session on children, the Monterrey Conference, the Johannesburg Summit and the World Food Summit took place in a context of increasing deterioration in the socio-economic conditions affecting many of our peoples, thus heightening frustration and despair because of the lack of tangible and concrete results. In order to prevent the situation from persisting, what is needed on the one hand is urgent political resolve on the part of all Member States to implement and fulfil the commitments undertaken at those conferences and, on the other hand, an increase in the participation and integration of developing countries in the process of global political decision-making.

Consequently, Paraguay has been striving to channel the limited resources at its disposal into areas of pressing priority in the social and economic fields, particularly in the areas of education and health, to the point where now they represent a majority of Paraguay's national budget. We have also reduced military expenditure to below 1 per cent of gross domestic product, the lowest level in our history. We have also been giving priority to State expenditure directed at building road and energy infrastructure, which will make it possible to integrate Paraguay into the transport and energy corridors that will link the Atlantic and Pacific oceans in South America.

Sustainable development in its broadest definition, as we addressed it at Johannesburg, increasingly requires shared solutions in a globalized world as well as differentiated commitments. For this reason, we deem it essential that the industrialized countries share in and support our development plans. Official development assistance should play only a complementary role that will enable us to incorporate, in a timely manner, the available financial resources — from both internal and external sources — so as to enable smaller countries to be properly incorporated into a competitive and independent world.

One of the instruments that is constantly touted as a producer of development is free trade. The developing countries want to see free trade on a double track. We want to have access to the markets of the developed countries, and we wish to see the elimination of measures that distort trade, such as agricultural subsidies, domestic export assistance and the abuse of anti-dumping measures.

If these protectionist practices persist, they will delay our countries' participation in the supposed benefits that, we believe, stem from free trade and will also considerably worsen the social divide in all its manifestations. Combating poverty is not just a political commitment but, above all, a moral one.

Paraguay welcomes the General Assembly's plan to devote a day — 16 September — to considering ways and means of providing support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development. High-level plenary sessions and interactive round tables will be held. We trust that the outcome will make a decisive contribution to promoting renewed commitments to the social and economic development of the whole of the African continent.

The International Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries and Transit Developing Countries will be held next year. It will address the problems that beset countries such as my own, such as integration into international markets, excessive costs related to transit transport, customs delays, restrictions and technical barriers to trade, as well as the need for financial support and the requisite investment in infrastructure and capacity development in order to overcome the disadvantages that stem from being landlocked.

Paraguay has offered to host the subregional Latin American preparatory meeting for the Ministerial Meeting, with a view to defining clearly all of the necessary measures to establish our country's requirements, in particular with respect to the differential treatment to be given to landlocked countries, through tangible commitments in the areas of transport, customs and duty-free zones and in the area of opening markets through reduced customs tariffs, the elimination of special excise duties and other measures that hinder the competitive participation in international trade of landlocked developing countries.

Paraguay, in the context of its democratization process, to which all citizens are committed at the State, regional and municipal levels, will be holding elections in April next year, which will once again confirm the consolidation of our democracy. Unfortunately, as in many other countries of the world, and especially in Latin America today, the democratic system is threatened by heightened poverty and the serious economic situation, which has caused the living conditions of our citizens to deteriorate. For that reason, our country must also receive the consideration that it deserves in the context of efforts to find solutions to these problems.

I trust that the Organization and the financial agencies and their principal members will respond appropriately at the right time.

In concluding my last address to this plenary as head of State of the Republic of Paraguay — my term of office, according to the Constitution, ends on 15 August 2003 — I wish to reaffirm my country's commitment to this Organization and its trust that it, in turn, will respond to the hopes and expectations of a better future for our peoples.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Paraguay for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Luis Angel González Macchi, President of the Republic of Paraguay, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Vojislav Koštunica, President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

*Mr. Vojislav Koštunica, President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Vojislav Koštunica, President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Koštunica**: It is a great honour and privilege for me, as the first democratically elected President of Yugoslavia in nearly 60 years, to address this gathering of world leaders. Against the solemn background of yesterday's commemoration and the challenges that confront us, I would like to share with the General Assembly my views on developments in South-East Europe.

Before I begin my remarks, allow me to express my deep satisfaction at the election of Mr. Jan Kavan to preside over the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. His leadership and experience make him uniquely qualified to guide the extremely important work of this body.

I also wish to extend my congratulations to Switzerland on joining the United Nations, and to Timor-Leste on its forthcoming accession to membership.

Nearly two years have elapsed since democracy returned to Yugoslavia — two years of concerted efforts by my country to alleviate the consequences of a decade of civil war, build democratic institutions, establish the rule of law, carry out market reforms and fulfil its obligations to the international community. After a 10-year delay, Yugoslavia has joined the large group of other European countries in transition that are building their future on the common values of respect for human rights, democracy, free-market economies and a commitment to European and Euro-Atlantic integration.

What distinguishes my country from most other Central and Eastern European States is that during that same decade Yugoslavia experienced the largest armed conflict in Europe since the Second World War. The dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, the civil wars waged on its soil and the subsequent NATO bombing have left continuing effects on the well-being of the citizens of my country — and on that of the citizens of most of South-East Europe. Yugoslavia knows only too well that peace in the region, attained at great sacrifice, must never be threatened again.

The efforts we have made to that end over the past two years, and the good political relations we have established with our neighbours, have strengthened my hope that an inter-State armed conflict in our region is unlikely to happen either today or in the foreseeable future. There are still ,threats to lasting peace in the world and in the region alike. Those threats come from ideological, religious, ethnic and political extremism, which fuel hatred and sow fear among our peoples.

Organized crime is often linked with that extremism, and is the lifeblood of terrorism. Even though terrorism and organized crime in South-East Europe are rather specific in their characteristics, there are many links to leading terrorist and criminal groups throughout the world. I am here to reaffirm my country's firm commitment to the struggle against this threat. I am also confident that the United Nations is the right place for the coordination of international efforts to rid the world of this evil. This struggle will not be easy but, together, the community of democratic nations can prevail through cooperation and a unified response to potential threats, regardless of where they may emanate from.

In addition to the security and military measures that we undertake, we must also be equally committed to using other methods to eradicate the conditions that breed terrorists. We must attack global poverty and injustice throughout the world with the same commitment and resolution with which we confront terrorism. We must reach out to the generation of young impoverished children, who are targets for terrorist recruitment and manipulation, by providing them with hope through education and economic opportunity.

The stabilization of our region requires continuous action not only by the States of the region but also by the entire international community. My country has finally undertaken a constitutional transformation, with facilitation by the European Union, in order to define the relations between its two member republics, Serbia and Montenegro. This will make our integration with the rest of Europe easier and quicker. Our success requires the success of our neighbours. When it comes to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Yugoslavia is a fervent advocate of the full implementation of the Dayton Accords. In fact, we are a guarantor of those Accords.

As in all other cases, our goal is to open borders, not to change them. We want to promote the flow of people and goods, thus restoring the broken ties that bound us to each other. I am pleased to see that this policy has produced significant results, although I have to say that slow economic recovery hinders our efforts, especially in the area of refugee returns. Yugoslavia, in cooperation with Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, will continue to do its part in establishing the trust and cooperation between our three States that will benefit our citizens. I am proud that Yugoslavia will host the next summit of these States, which is scheduled to be held in Belgrade this autumn.

I am saddened that the situation in Kosovo is far less encouraging. Some progress has been made since Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) was adopted, and since the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) arrived in the province. With the enormous help and understanding of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, a bright spot was reached through the agreement with Special Representative Hans Haekkerup on cooperation between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and UNMIK in November 2001. Unfortunately, Kosovo remains a factor of political instability and a centre for organized criminal networks that transit our region and stretch from Central Asia to South America. There is little doubt that these networks cooperate with extremist and terrorist groups in our region and beyond.

Another problem with Kosovo is the desperate plight of the close to 250,000 Serbs, Montenegrins and other non-Albanians who desire to return to their homes but who remain displaced, mostly in central Serbia. Unlike the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, less that one per cent of Kosovo's population of internally displaced persons has returned. To make matters worse, the fate of more than 5,000 abducted and missing persons is yet to be uncovered. During the last two years, Kosovo's instability twice spilled over into neighbouring areas, first into the Presevo valley in southern Serbia, and then into the western part of Macedonia. Regardless of the fact that Serbs and others participate in Kosovo's provisional institutions, this has not led to an improvement in the security situation or to the establishment of complete freedom of movement. Without immediate and noticeable improvement in those two areas, a more massive return of internally displaced persons is unlikely. All of that, along with the reluctance of Kosovo Albanian political leaders to enter into dialogue with us, makes is impossible to begin a serious discussion on the final status of Kosovo.

Yugoslavia will continue to do its part in establishing the conditions for a democratic and peaceful solution to this open issue. To that end, I am pleased that we will upgrade to the ambassadorial level diplomatic relations with our neighbour, the Republic of Albania. I am confident that the cooperation between our two countries will continue and that jointly we will be in a better position to find solutions to outstanding problems.

Let me stress that we are fully aware of our international commitments and that we will meet them, not because this is demanded of us but because we desire to establish a democratic society based on the rule of law.

(*spoke in French*)

I believe that, at the conceptual level, the final point I am going to make is the most important because it determines everything else. The world must understand that change has truly taken place in Yugoslavia and that no authoritarian regime has any chance there anymore. Sometimes there is mistrust towards my country; this is almost unbelievable. There is still prejudice against us, as if nothing has changed, whereas actually a great deal has changed — and substantially. The political situation is still evolving. There are still disagreements among the various players. But this is perfectly normal for a transitional period. Nothing should serve as a pretext for continuing a policy of conditionality towards us, or for attempts to interfere in our internal affairs. We continue often to see how such an approach is usually counter-productive — not to mention the time it wastes.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Vojislav Koštunica, President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera, President of the Republic of Guatemala**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Guatemala.

*Mr. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera, President of the Republic of Guatemala, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera, President of the Republic of Guatemala, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Portillo** (*spoke in Spanish*): It is difficult to come to New York at this time without recalling the dreadful events of exactly one year ago, which brought the whole of the international community together in support of this country, and this city. On this occasion, we reiterate our solidarity and our conviction that the best way to cope with terrorism is within the multilateral framework, and above all here at the United Nations.

I also take this opportunity to convey our appreciation to Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea for his excellent presidency of the last session. I would also like to congratulate you most sincerely, Sir, on having assumed the presidency of the General Assembly at this session. I have no doubt that your proven ability and recognized experience as an academic, a statesman and an official in the Czech Republic and abroad will enable you to guide our deliberations successfully. We also congratulate the Swiss Confederation and Timor-Leste, the former one of the oldest countries in the world, and the latter the youngest: one is now a full Member of the Organization, and the other soon will be.

I would like to address two subjects. The first is developments within Guatemala, particularly regarding fulfilment of the peace agreements, in whose negotiation and subsequent implementation the United Nations played such a significant part. The second area I shall be addressing relates to our position on the most important items on the agenda of this session.

On the first subject, let me say that the past year has been marked by intense activity in Guatemala. There were important advances, but also some setbacks. We confront an unfavourable international situation that has had a negative effect on our economy. Conditions have been made more complex by a severe drop in the price of our traditional export products.

Unusual rainfall patterns have affected the production of grain in several regions. I make these points because it would certainly be easier to comply fully with the commitments contained in the peace agreements in a context of economic expansion, instead of having to do so in the face of serious fiscal restrictions and increasing demands on our Government.

Yet we have made headway, even when we had to take decisions that were politically unpopular but that were necessary to attain the goals of the peace agreements. This was the case with our tax reform, which included an increase in the value added tax. That reform is already in force, and my Government has thereby fulfilled one of the specific commitments of the peace agreements. This measure laid a financial foundation without which the fulfilment of other peace commitments and maintenance of macroeconomic stability would simply have been unthinkable.

It has fallen to me to preside over the first Government of Guatemala in the new era of peace. The peace agreements were our second declaration of independence and they mark the road to building a tolerant and non-exclusionary society, a State that is democratic, participatory and where the rule of law prevails.

During my administration public expenditure has focused on education; but we also address, as matters of priority, access to land and the reduction of poverty. Guatemala is a country of marked contrasts between wealth and poverty. We labour under age-old conditions of injustice. We turned to the Government to promote reform for the well-being of our people, particularly indigenous peoples, children, women, peasants and the victims of the internal armed conflict. Reforms are essential in order to uphold democracy.

There is powerful resistance to change, and this carries political and even personal costs. But our commitment to democracy, social justice and equity is unshakeable.

There are just too many things to do in Guatemala. After governing for three years, our awareness of what is lacking makes us feel dissatisfied. On gender equality, we have made some progress on the institutional plane, and we now, jointly with the women's movement, have forged an approach with the effect of State policy.

We are promoting educational reform, literacy campaigns, scholarships for girls in the rural areas and country-wide nutritional programmes in schools. We are working also on poverty reduction strategies.

These are long-range policies, whose results will be fully enjoyed only by later generations. The recent enactment of three laws — a reformed municipal code, a law on development councils and a law on decentralization — forms the basis for the most far-reaching reform of the State to have occurred in 100 years.

The peace agreements are comprehensive in their scope. We have promoted a substantive social agenda, and we have adopted measures towards free markets.

We have undertaken reforms in the area of security, although much remains to be done. The military is now focusing increasingly on national defence. We have reduced the number of military personnel as well as their functions, and some of the resources thus freed up will be been used for public education and civilian security services. Military reconversion, however, will not be easy; we will have to make a special effort to achieve a smaller and better equipped army. Civilians are preparing to take over more complex roles and society is being called upon to participate in elaborating important public policies, such as overall public security and national defence.

We are fostering dialogue with civil society on important issues such as agriculture and rural development, transparency, combating corruption and providing compensation and reparation for victims of armed conflict. Our aspirations do not stop there, however. Guatemala has not yet achieved full reconciliation. We need to reconcile the elements of our society and provide opportunities for development without excluding anyone. Essential steps for achieving reconciliation include identifying all the parties to the conflict, making symbolic gestures to repair the damage done, finding out and acknowledging the truth about what took place, allowing justice a free hand and promoting forgiveness. Our nation has undertaken these tasks in a diligent manner, although some uncertainty persists.

My Government's term of office will expire in a little over a year, by which time the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) will be planning to withdraw. The Mission has played a fundamental role as the critical conscience of the State and has actively supported the fundamental changes that have taken place. We appreciate the work that it has done and we would like here to request the extension of its mandate to the end of 2004 so that it may accompany us as we make the transition to a new Administration. Our hope is that MINUGUA will hand over its functions in an orderly manner to national bodies and, where appropriate, to the programmes and agencies of the United Nations.

Let me turn now to the agenda for this session. First of all, I would like to reiterate our full and unconditional support for the United Nations as the highest form of multilateralism. We are convinced that this Organization will have to play a crucial role in the twenty-first century. We believe that the Millennium Declaration provides an adequate road map enabling us to set out our priorities and the steps to be taken to fulfil the goals set. Its implementation has been given a powerful boost by the Monterrey Consensus and the Plan of Action adopted in Johannesburg a few days ago. We also fully support the stewardship of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan.

We agree that this Organization must adapt to the challenges of globalization. We are aware that progress has been made in this respect in recent years, but much remains to be done. In this context, we look forward with great interest to the new reform proposals to be submitted by the Secretary-General towards the end of the month. We pledge to participate actively in analysing and debating them.

Few would doubt that Security Council reform is the most urgent of the outstanding reform efforts. We must not delay our efforts to ensure that that organ is made more effective, representative and transparent. To that end, we advocate the expansion of the membership of the Council and believe that the veto power should

be used strictly in conformity with the United Nations Charter.

We also believe that it is necessary to strengthen the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council so that the three principal organs of the United Nations mutually support one another. We reiterate our total rejection of all forms of terrorism, and support collective action by the international community to combat that scourge through, inter alia, action in accordance with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001).

We believe that we must strengthen our collective capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts, whether of a transboundary or internal character. With regard to disarmament, we favour the complete elimination of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons, an end to the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and a ban on the use of anti-personnel landmines and other explosive devices. We support all United Nations actions aimed at achieving such goals as well as at establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in all parts of the world.

We believe in particular that the United Nations must continue to address the development challenge. Working with the multilateral financial institutions, our Organization must play a crucial role in ensuring that the benefits of globalization are widely shared among all countries. This will require common efforts within countries and in the international community as a whole. Furthermore, Guatemala is a party to the principal environmental treaties, and we reiterate our commitment to maintaining the ecological equilibrium of the Earth.

We recently made a contribution in this respect by offering to host the headquarters of the secretariat of the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the North-East Pacific. We participated actively in drafting that Convention.

My country is aware of the divisions between sister peoples in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. We fervently hope that it will be possible to resolve those differences by peaceful means through dialogue so that, without discrimination, all the peoples of the world can be represented here. I would like to make special reference to the 23 million people of the Republic of China on Taiwan, whose aspirations to participate in the work of international organizations have not yet been fulfilled. The countries of Central America in general, and Guatemala in particular, view those aspirations as beneficial to global peace and democracy; they deserve our support.

It is likewise our earnest hope that a solution will be found, based on security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) to the difficult situation in the Middle East, which has worsened over the past year.

Finally, we reaffirm our strong support for Central American integration and our commitment to the other countries of Latin American and the Caribbean. The Government of Guatemala has participated in important initiatives in the area of regional and subregional integration. In that connection, I would like to point out that, in accordance with a constitutional mandate, Guatemala has done its best to strengthen bonds of friendship and good-neighbourliness with the State of Belize, without prejudice to the active search for a peaceful, honourable, equitable and permanent solution to our territorial dispute, which dates back over a century.

On Monday, 16 September, at the headquarters of the Organization of American States, the representatives of our two countries will be presented with the conclusions and recommendations of a conciliation process that has taken place under the auspices of that organization. Any definitive settlement will have to be approved by referendum in Guatemala. We commend the solidarity displayed by the Government of the Republic of Honduras with a view to facilitating amicably the delimitation of the maritime areas in the Gulf of Honduras.

In conclusion, I would like to quote a Guatemalan poet, Otto René Castillo, who was a victim of internal armed conflict. Fifty years ago, he wrote:

> "Smiles will return to the face of humanity, because children born in the twenty-first century will be happy".

Our mission must be to make this come true. Such is the goal of our tireless struggle.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Guatemala for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Alfonso Portillo Cabrera, President of the Republic of Guatemala, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Hâmid Karzai, President of Afghanistan**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Afghanistan.

*Mr. Hâmid Karzai, President of Afghanistan, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Hâmid Karzai, President of Afghanistan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Karzai**: Not very far from here stood two towers that symbolized freedom, prosperity and progress. Halfway around the globe stood two magnificent Buddhas that represented a culture of tolerance and a nation with a rich history. These symbols have now been linked together through the global scourge of terrorism. Terror may have demolished these physical structures, yet it served to strengthened the resolve of the international community never to abandon the spirit and determination with which these icons were built.

Terrorism and violence are against the teaching of Islam; a religion that stands for peace, respect for human dignity, dialogue, and tolerance. The Taliban, who destroyed our country and cultural heritage, did not represent Afghans, nor does the Al-Qaida represent the Arab world. Even more, neither one represents Islam.

The Afghan people, as the prime victims of war and violence, and the front line fighters against terrorism, particularly appreciate, honour and admire the friendly hand extended to them by the United States of America and other members of the anti-terror coalition, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the United Nations Organization, particularly the Secretary-General Kofi Annan — whom I must thank for his kind remarks and support of Afghanistan this morning — as well as Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for their tremendous support to Afghanistan during this critical juncture of Afghan history.

Sir, I am honoured to have this opportunity to highlight some achievements of my Administration during the brief course of the past eight months. First, the implementation of the Bonn Agreement and the peace process in my country are quite on track. In accordance with the terms of the Bonn Agreement, the people of Afghanistan manifested their robust resolution and solid consensus for democracy and the rule of law by gathering under one tent to convene the emergency Loya Jirga — that is the Afghan Grand Council — held on 11 to 17 June 2002. The success of the Loya Jirga, with broad and unprecedented participation of women, was a significant milestone in the recent history of Afghanistan, and a major step forward in the process of peace, stability and nation-building. During the proceeding of the Loya Jirga, hundreds of delegates exercised their right to free speech and expressed their desire for security, peace, national unity, reconstruction, democracy and good governance.

The people of Afghanistan told me univocally of their disdain for war and violence. The Loya Jirga demonstrated that after 23 years of imposed wars, foreign interventions, violence, bloodshed, repression, destruction and subversion, Afghans are on the way to enjoy peace and benefit from reconstruction. Hence, they are determined to take every measure to avoid a relapse into warlordism and lawlessness.

Secondly, as a result of the back-to-school campaign, schools that were closed for over six years, when neither boys nor girls went to school, have reopened. Three million children from all over the country, both boys and girls, have returned to school.

Thirdly, the strong commitment of the Government to the eradication of poppy cultivation and the destruction of narcotics resulted in the burning of drugs worth an estimated street value of 8 billion dollars.

Fourthly, as a sign of stability and security, we are very glad to have over 1.6 million of our refugees, who were mainly living in Pakistan and Iran, return home in a period of less than seven to eight months.

Fifthly, we have formed a Constitutional Commission to undertake the historic task of drafting the country's new Constitution. We have already established a Judicial Commission, to rebuild the Afghan justice system, a Civil Service Commission to reform the entire administration and impose a merit-based system, as well as a Human Rights Commission to protect human rights, women's rights and civil liberties. We have also adopted a series of laws and decrees to promote and attract domestic and international investments, safeguard property rights

and other pillars of the free market economy, combat narcotics, and protect the forests and the environment.

Sixthly, despite these achievements, we are realistic about countless challenges and problems that we are confronted with. Foremost among them is security; a principal demand of the Afghan people, and the most fundamental requirement for sustainable peace. It is the position of my Government that the real key to the restoration of sustainable security lies in the creation of a national army and a national police force, along with a comprehensive demobilization programme.

We have established a commission for the formation of a national army. I have also highlighted the establishment of the national army and police force as a top priority and the main objective of my Government; but the people of Afghanistan need a clear commitment and sustained support from the international community to realize these objectives.

We appreciate the contributions of our American, British, German, Turkish and French friends in training our national army and police force, and the Government of Japan for its assistance in demobilization programmes. I would like to once again request the donor countries to further support our strategy for the creation of a national army and a national system for security by translating international pledges into concrete contributions.

The Afghan delegates from various provinces that regularly come to Kabul to discuss various matters with our Administration, strongly request the expansion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to other parts of the country. They want to be certain that Afghanistan will not be once again left alone by the international community.

We owe particular gratitude to the donor community for its assistance to Afghanistan, but would also like to remind our friends that the majority of the financial pledges made to Afghanistan at the Tokyo Conference are still unfulfilled. We have presented the donor countries with our National Development Framework to indicate our priorities, help manage the reconstruction programmes effectively, and channel financial resources to national capacity building. It is the position of my Government that the consolidation of peace and stability depends on the international community's sustained engagement in providing funding for reconstruction.

Implementation of labour-intensive projects throughout Afghanistan has a direct influence on security and the demobilization of combatants. Despite these facts, the level of direct financial support provided to the Afghan Government can be characterized as insufficient, especially given the generosity of donors at the Tokyo Conference, where over $4.5 billion dollars were pledged to support Afghanistan. The Afghan people urgently needs the pledges in Tokyo to be turned into cash.

While we agree that there is still a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, I would like to request the international community to focus more on reconstruction, to support long-term recovery efforts, and to treat the causes of poverty, rather than its symptoms. Building highways and repairing the road networks in Afghanistan is an important undertaking with significant economic, political and social impact for the Afghan people. It creates jobs, helps with security and demobilization, provides better connectivity, strengthens national unity and assists with the reintegration of Afghanistan into the regional economy.

While the world has now clearly voiced its unity to honour the dignity of life and reconstruction over terror, destruction and subversion, the threat posed by the terrorist groups requires resolute commitment on the part of all nations to fight this evil to the end. I warned the world before the 11 September tragedy about the dangers of terrorism. The Afghan people have suffered tremendously at the hands of the Taliban and terrorist groups. They killed many thousands of our people, destroyed villages and burned orchards and vineyards.

Afghanistan is a Muslim country and the people of Afghanistan truly believe in the teachings of Islam, which is based on peace, justice, equality, moderation and tolerance, and reject any abuse and misuse of the holy name of Islam by extremist groups to justify violence, death and destruction. My vision of Afghanistan is of a modern State that builds on our Islamic values, promoting justice, the rule of law, human rights and freedom of commerce, and forming a bridge between cultures and civilizations — a model of tolerance and prosperity based on the rich heritage of the Islamic civilization.

Afghanistan is committed to continuing to have friendly relations with its neighbours and the

international community and to being a resilient partner in the war against terrorism. The establishment of security and prosperity within Afghanistan is a means of promoting security and prosperity in the region and the world as a whole. We do not want to live in the past and are determined not to let the events of the past harm our relations with our neighbours. We extend a sincere hand of friendship to all our neighbours on the basis of mutual respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and non-interference in the internal affairs of each other. We will never permit our soil to be used for any subversive activities against any of our neighbours or countries in the region, and we expect others to do the same.

We are deeply concerned about the loss of innocent lives in Palestine and Israel. We strongly support the realization of the right of self-determination of the people of Palestine. We also support the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Saudi Arabian-sponsored declarations in Beirut. We are also concerned about the dispute between our friends and neighbours, India and Pakistan. We have good relationships with both those countries. The people of Afghanistan know the high price of war and violence and are yearning for peace, stability and prosperity in the region. They know that a peaceful resolution of the issues between Pakistan and India is an urgent necessity to consolidate peace and security in the region and the world at large.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Switzerland and East Timor on joining the family of the United Nations, and extend my appreciation to Iran and Pakistan, our neighbouring countries, for having accepted millions of our refugees for over two decades and for having looked after them. We are very grateful to both these neighbours. We are also very grateful to the donor countries for having helped Afghanistan and to the international organizations that have helped us over the past many months and years.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Afghanistan for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Hámid Karzai, President of Afghanistan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Ms. Mireya Moscoso, President of the Republic of Panama**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Panama.

*Ms. Mireya Moscoso, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Mireya Moscoso, President of the Republic of Panama, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

**President Moscoso** (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin my statement by expressing the pleasure of the Government and people of Panama on your well-deserved election, Sir, as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. We fully supported that election.

We value your understanding of most of the issues that are the subjects of debate in this world arena and the opportunities afforded us by the experience that you have gained in your homeland, along with that in general of the peoples of Eastern Europe, a region that, in recent years, has been the crucible of the most complex problems and, at the same time, the most innovative solutions.

I also pay tribute to the extraordinary work of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who has made undeniable and productive efforts to achieve reconciliation among peoples living in the midst of conflict.

I wish to express my satisfaction at having been able to stand with the American people at the commemoration of the first anniversary of the tragic events of 11 September. Images of the moving and, above all, authentic homage paid yesterday morning will remain graven indelibly in my memory. If the nationalities of the heroes had been noted along with their names, we would undoubtedly have understood more clearly that this crime was an assault not only on the United States of America, but on the whole of humankind.

Terrorism has become the gravest threat to international security and to the environment of peace that has gradually gained ground throughout the world. This has come at the price of an immense sacrifice in

terms both of human life and of resources that should be devoted to promoting the collective well-being of our societies.

That is why terrorism must be defeated utterly, using all means available to us, wherever it may be found. With such resolve, Panama has taken specific steps, ratifying the major international instruments against terrorism and adopting and implementing domestic legal norms designed to control the sources of financing. In the context of this collective endeavour, our country has chaired the Committee on Hemispheric Security of the Organization of American States, seeking thereby to adapt to our realities all instruments that are relevant to this issue, while strengthening mechanisms of cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

In the light of that commitment, on 7 March we ratified the Rome Statute creating the International Criminal Court and deposited our instruments of ratification with the United Nations on 21 March. We firmly believe that, as stipulated by the Statute, we must end the impunity of those who commit appalling crimes against humanity, regardless of the charges brought by the victims and of the immunities that may have been extended to the perpetrator within or outside his own country.

However, the fight against terrorism and the abuse of power that hinders democracy and undermines human rights must go hand in hand with genuine growth opportunities for the developing countries.

The Republic of Panama has unreservedly assumed the commitment to broadly disseminate the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on women, as well as to implement the Platform's 12 critical areas of concern.

We also reaffirm that the progress of nations must be based on sustainable development, guided by the commitments undertaken at Rio de Janeiro and the relevant processes culminating at Johannesburg, with all their agreements and initiatives.

Our foreign policy is based on the fundamental values of our people, such as the promotion of democracy and good governance, solidarity and international cooperation. For that reason, we have embraced the free trade option, but, as we indicated in Monterrey in March 2002, a more equitable economic regime must be consolidated that will enhance opportunities for cooperation, address the question of our external indebtedness and stimulate free trade based on equity and symmetry.

In that context, we currently host the interim secretariat for the Free Trade Area of the Americas, aspiring, as we have demonstrated, to become the site of the permanent secretariat in 2005.

Panama is moving firmly in the right direction, addressing the far-reaching themes of the new millennium with the active participation of society. It is modernizing the State administration, tackling the need to modernize its educational and social security systems and developing its rural sector. At the same time, we are beginning to forge a new industrial strategy with tools that will give us access to international markets on a competitive footing in terms of price and quality.

At the same time as the Panama Canal is being rapidly modernized to respond to the demands of world trade, we are enhancing our democratic stability through increasingly efficient and transparent processes. We respect and support human rights, particularly the freedom of expression, and we are taking innovative steps to guarantee a promising future for our society.

In the context of all of these initiatives, which are repeated in country after country, the United Nations, without doubt, will have to play a much more aggressive role, sustaining and enhancing capacities for political dialogue and preventing the economic domain from assuming that role. For that reason, this revitalizing effort must be supplemented with sustained action, as has been recommended by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and other regional groups.

Panama hails the way the Security Council has conducted its work over the past year and continues to believe that this important United Nations organ be composed of a larger number of members. However, as we did at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, we stress today that consideration of permanent or non-permanent status must be linked to justifications in keeping with the new vision of the world and that changes must not be introduced that could lead to the permanent distribution of privileges that became manifestly obsolete years ago.

Like the rest of the world, we are concerned at the situation in the Middle East, in neighbouring Colombia and in many other parts of the world where international support is still being anxiously awaited.

Our Government believes that the benefits of the United Nations system and its various bodies must be extended to the people of Taiwan, while fostering a broad debate with the aim of beginning formal, peaceful negotiations that will lead the people of China to resolve existing differences.

Our delegation is particularly gratified at the presence of so many political leaders who have come here in a gesture of fraternal solidarity with all the citizens of the world who were victims of the madness and the evil of groups that do not understand the advantages of dialogue and civilized understanding.

We will only be able achieve the lofty goals we are setting at this forum through the unity of those who aspire to live in a fraternal, prosperous and peaceful world. May God enlighten us and guide us in the search for that legitimate aspiration.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Panama for the statement she has just made.

*Ms. Mireya Moscoso, President of the Republic of Panama, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

*Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Equatorial Guinea congratulates you, Mr. President, and the other members of the Bureau of this session of the General Assembly on their election to their posts. We wish them every success and offer them our full cooperation. We also wish to convey to the outgoing President and Bureau the appreciation of Equatorial Guinea for their excellent work at a crucial time in the history of the United Nations.

The delegation, the people and the Government of Equatorial Guinea welcome the admission of the Swiss Confederation to full membership in the United Nations. Switzerland is a country with which Equatorial Guinea has excellent relations of friendship and cooperation. This was indeed a historic event that strengthened and reaffirmed the principle of the universality of the United Nations. We also welcome the forthcoming admission of Timor-Leste to the United Nations.

I wish strongly to join Equatorial Guinea's voice to the expressions of support and solidarity that have been heard from this rostrum towards the people and the Government of the United States of America one year after the horror and the barbarity caused by the shameful terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.

We reaffirm once again Equatorial Guinea's firm commitment to the ceaseless fight against international terrorism and organized crime in all its forms and manifestations, because this is a fight that involves all the nations of the world, united by the ideal of maintaining peace, and because terrorism represents a serious challenge to humanity as a whole.

Indeed, terrorism has become a sophisticated network of political, economic and technical plotting that transcends national borders. These are real organizations that have the resources to carry out criminal activity.

Even more disturbing are manifestations of covert terrorism carried out under the pretext of defending and protecting democracy and human rights. This leads us to declare that one cannot combat terrorism in certain areas and encourage it in others, depending on who the potential victims may be. Equatorial Guinea and other countries in our subregion continue to be victims of this ambiguity and contradiction. The demands made on our countries and the conditionalities imposed on us in the name of promoting democracy and human rights must not serve as a pretext for encouraging intolerance or political extremism or for instigating confrontation among the various social groupings in a country so as to weaken its sense of unity and solidarity.

Time and again we have stressed the imperative need to preserve peace and security in the world. The international community has to reactivate its machinery for conflict prevention and settlement, because these conflicts are a scourge on vast areas of the world in general, and to the African continent in particular.

Because of its geography, Equatorial Guinea is seriously concerned about constant serious threats to the maintenance of peace and stability in Central Africa resulting from disputes and greed for the enormous natural resources located there. Because of the geo-strategic importance of the subregion, we want to preserve a balance of force in the Gulf of Guinea, and we want to preserve our area as a haven of peace, stability and prosperity for our peoples.

The United Nations must be vigilant, given the threats to peace, security and stability in the Gulf of Guinea. In the specific case of Equatorial Guinea, I would like to say that for over 25 years it was under United Nations supervision, vis-à-vis human rights, but that on 19 April 2002 at the fifty-eighth session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights resolution 2002/11 was adopted. The resolution ended the Special Rapporteur's mission for human rights in Equatorial Guinea. The Commission on Human Rights therein explicitly recognized the efforts made by our Government and the progress made by our country in the area of human rights and strengthening democracy.

However, we were deeply distressed a few days later to see that our country was a victim of attempted terrorist action against the life of individuals and social peace. Those responsible were arrested and will now be tried under our law. Yet, some pressure groups with undeclared interests in Equatorial Guinea have spoken out and have been trying to use the forthcoming trial as a basis for launching a new campaign of defamation against my country in the face of these acts of destabilization. In addition, these groups are still seeking to confuse the issue and to keep the international community uninformed as to the true political, economic and social developments in Equatorial Guinea. These groups have been trying to disrupt a good climate of dialogue and understanding between our Government and the political forces in our country. However, as concerns these manoeuvres, I would reaffirm to the international community our resolve to preserve the spirit of trying to reach consensus with all the political groupings in our country to ensure that the forthcoming presidential elections proceed smoothly.

The situation we have just described is not peculiar to Equatorial Guinea, because the same situation can be seen in several countries in our subregion. My country is resolved to ensure that Central Africa becomes an area of peace, solidarity and cooperation.

We hail the initiatives under way to restore peace to Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, and we commend the work of the United Nations to that end.

The picture of conflict and instability in the world today stands in stark contrast to our desire to encourage economic development and prosperity for all countries of the world. Just a few days ago in Johannesburg, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the international community undertook to work in solidarity to achieve the goals set at Rio de Janeiro, the Millennium Summit and Monterrey. To that end, it is essential that a new civilization and a new political culture bud and take root in the consciousness of the international community, recognizing once and for all that all nations of the world, rich and poor, large and small, enjoy the same rights to peace, stability and prosperity. This is essential if we are to survive the current crisis.

This General Assembly faces the challenge of resolving burning issues, such as combating HIV/AIDS and implementing the goals of the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Consensus.

My Government shares these concerns and urges that top priority be given to strengthening the democratic process and the rule of law, protecting human rights, ensuring good governance and achieving sustainable development. We also believe that the peace process in the Middle East should be encouraged, along with the dialogue under way between North and South Korea, with a view to peaceful reunification.

We also encourage democratization in the United Nations itself, so that it can strengthen its efforts in the world as the principal guarantor of international peace and security. This General Assembly session, just like the meetings at Johannesburg and other summits, provides an excellent opportunity, not for reviving an anachronistic confrontation between nations, but rather

for moving deeper into the area of reaching agreement and of holding a dialogue in the great debate for the progress and prosperity of all peoples in the world.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Leo Falcam, President of the Federated States of Micronesia**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Federated States of Micronesia.

*Mr. Leo A. Falcam, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Leo Falcam, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Falcam**: I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election. My Government hails the selection of a leader with such esteemed qualifications, and we are confident you will lead the work of this body in the same distinguished manner as that of your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea.

The tragic events just over one year ago in this great city and elsewhere in the United States have transformed the nature of life throughout the world, reaching the farthest corners of the planet. My country, far removed from the devastation of that fateful day in September 2001, reaffirms its full support for the efforts to bring those responsible to justice. More broadly, we extend our unwavering support for all measures necessary to combat terrorism and one day, we hope, to eliminate it.

We in the Federated States of Micronesia are doing our part to work towards a more effective global antiterrorism network by putting in place measures to interdict the movement of terrorists and their funds through our region. We look forward to the work planned in that regard for this session of the General Assembly.

The meetings of the Pacific Islands Forum this year were dominated by security considerations in the wake of those events. We note with full support the Nasonini Declaration, which enhances existing regional security measures. Likewise, speaking as Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders, I am confident in saying that every island leader is personally committed to seeing that our region serves no useful purpose for the dark forces of terrorism.

The realm of international security has seen fundamental and beneficial change in the past year. Sadly, the same is not true for most other primary issues on our agenda, notably the elimination of poverty and stemming the tide of environmental degradation.

On those issues, as a developing country, we share the concerns and positions of other developing countries. We have all made powerful statements and set lofty goals through the Rio Declaration 10 years ago, the Millennium Declaration two years ago and, most recently, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Declaration. Of special interest to my delegation, I would note that the same holds for the Declaration of Barbados on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Yet it is true that progress has been slow in addressing the needs of the world's poor. Likewise, 10 years after the Rio Summit, the quality of our environment and its ability to sustain future generations still diminishes daily.

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, the Federated States of Micronesia joined the other Pacific Island countries in proposing a number of umbrella initiatives that provide a framework for partnerships with developed countries to assist us in implementing sustainable development. Those initiatives reflect our common concerns but recognize the uniqueness of each of our island nations. We hope that those practical proposals will help to turn decades of pronouncements into action. We are encouraged that some of our Pacific neighbours, such as New Zealand and Australia, have already come forward with specific partnership proposals, and we look forward to the support of the

United Nations system as well. Such developments convince us that Johannesburg will be remembered as a landmark on our long journey.

We appreciate the international community's decision to hold the next Barbados review conference in 2004, and we look forward to adopting concrete goals and timetables at the international level by that time.

Development and the environment are inexorably linked. That truth has been reaffirmed in each of these Declarations. We all know that there cannot be sustainable development without environmental protection, and there cannot be environmental protection without sustainable development. Nor can the world hope to support 6 billion people at the level of consumption we now see in the developed world. The future will require sacrifice: sacrifice on the part of the North, to adopt more sustainable living practices, and by the South, which must recognize that the past development paths followed by the North unfortunately do not lead to a sustainable future.

It is this body, above all others, that will grapple with those painful realities. We must realize that they present issues even more complex than some of our more familiar geopolitical concerns.

Among other things, new attention must be given to the reform of the United Nations, because we must address more than just structural adjustments in the representational format of our body. This reform must take due account that the entire world is reassessing our accustomed ways of living. Still, there must be a start. First and foremost, we call on all nations to give fresh consideration to reform of the Security Council to better reflect today's realities. In that regard, we reiterate our support for permanent seats for Japan and Germany and for a system that ensures more equitable representation by developing countries.

The Federated States of Micronesia is engaged on all issues before this body that affect us. But, given our unique circumstances, we have no choice but to place top priority on protection of the oceans and the climate. Global ocean policy has been a bright spot in recent years, particularly as it relates to the Pacific. Pacific island Governments recently concluded work on a regional ocean policy, and they have developed a number of positive new initiatives on fisheries and other related matters. Yet those positive accomplishments in ocean policy are threatened by continued violation of our sovereignty in the form of illegal fishing and trans-shipment of hazardous materials.

Only a few weeks ago, in defiance of international obligations, several of the world's largest industrial powers collaborated once again in yet another extremely dangerous shipment of radioactive material through our region. Without prior notice or assurance of compensation for damage, this shipment passed within 30 miles of the capital of the Federated States of Micronesia. Our expressed objections to this violation of our exclusive economic zone were flatly ignored. Effective regulation of ocean-based trans-shipment of these dangerous materials must find its way into the priorities of this body.

Similarly, with regard to climate change, we welcome the positive accomplishments in the negotiating arena under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, most notably the Kyoto Protocol. We applaud those nations that have joined us in ratifying the Protocol, and we welcome with anticipation its imminent entry into force. But the sad reality is that 10 years have passed since the Framework Convention became effective — 10 more years of damage to the earth's climate.

A handful of countries have succeeded in continuing to stall progress in the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions. Again I ask these nations, as I have on each occasion when I have appeared before this body, to reconsider their policies and to recognize the international implications of their inaction.

I call upon those nations to remember the wise words of United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who said that

> "liberty does not permit an individual citizen or group of citizens to commit acts of depredation against nature in such a way as to harm their neighbours, and especially to harm future generations of Americans."

Let us not lose sight of the fact that there is now universal recognition of the reality of the problem of climate change and its causes. In the light of that recognition, it is not enough that most nations are willing to take action. All must work together to develop effective mitigation strategies to prevent further damage, and to define and implement adaptation measures for the most vulnerable.

We have just over 100,000 citizens in the Federated States of Micronesia. We have no natural sources of fossil fuel. We have become far too dependent on imports of fossil fuels during the past half-century; even so, our contribution to global emissions of greenhouse gases is negligible. Looking to the future, we have committed to a reduction and eventual elimination of fossil fuel for energy production. But we must rely on Western technologies if we are to move in the direction of renewable sources of energy. Thus, we are disturbed by the policies of developed countries that give little more than lip service to development of renewable energy technologies.

We are alarmed at the continuing refusal of some nations even to begin to acknowledge the nature of the climate problem, let alone to take progressive action to fight it. Also distressing is the fact that, at the same time, some of those nations are reducing their aid presence in developing countries. Some feel that, just when the need is greatest, the world community is closing in upon itself, in a cocoon of self-interest.

It is inconceivable to us that global champions of equity and democratic ideals — nations whose principles we seek to emulate — could assume a position on the most crucial social issues of our time that succumbs to private interests. These private interests, for obvious reasons, insist that, to the extent any problem exists, it can be addressed in good time, on a voluntary basis. My people find it very difficult to reconcile such private influences with the principles those nations promote.

This fifty-seventh session provides a genuine opportunity for the world community as a whole to take note of our recent conferences, to seize the initiative and to set a course towards tangible progress on the issues we all agree to be of common concern.

In conclusion, our deepest sympathies are extended to the victims of war, terrorism, political injustice, environmental degradation and economic want throughout the world. We hope and pray that our actions here might, in ways large and small, lead to a better world for them and for us all.

The Federated States of Micronesia is a small force within the community of nations. Nevertheless, we pledge our full assistance and cooperation towards the attainment of this goal. We take to heart the words of British statesman Sir Francis Bacon, who once said: "He makes the greatest mistake who decides to do nothing because he can do so little."

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federated States of Micronesia for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Leo Falcam, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Fradique Bandeira Melo de Menezes, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

*Mr. Fradique Bandeira Melo de Menezes, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Fradique Bandeira Melo de Menezes, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President de Menezes**: It is a great honour for me, as the new President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, to appear before the Assembly for the first time and to join in the deliberations of this fifty-seventh session.

On behalf of the citizens of Sao Tome and Principe, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of this fifty-seven session and request you to accept my warmest greetings and those of my people. May I also extend our congratulations to Timor-Leste, soon to be a Member of the Organization, and to Switzerland, which has just become a Member. We hope that East Timor's becoming a full member of the international community will guarantee that its brotherly people will have the right to live free of the hegemonic appetite of some of their neighbours.

Few people in the world have ever heard of my country — Sao Tome and Principe.

*Mr. Da Cruz (Portugal), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

Few people, even in this Hall, could find Sao Tome and Principe on a map. We are a small island-nation in the Gulf of Guinea, off the coast of West Africa. We are poor. We are remote. Despite our isolation, my people face the same issues that confront every country in the world today: first, how to protect innocent people from acts of terror, violence and mass destruction; secondly, how to eliminate the grinding poverty that still afflicts and cripples half the world's population and affects people in every country on Earth; and, thirdly, how to save our environment and protect the world's natural resources from degradation and ultimate destruction.

As much as any people on the face of this planet, we deplore terrorism. We condemn those who kill civilians and target women and children, and we say to them, "You are wrong to take the lives of the innocent, whatever the reason, whatever the cause." That is what my people in Sao Tome and Principe believe.

And so it is that last 11 September my tiny nation, with its population of only 140,000 people, only a very small fraction of the population of the City of New York, was horrified by the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. We send our condolences to those in all the many countries who lost friends and family there. We join in condemning those who carried out these terrible acts. We call for their capture and incapacitation. That is what we feel.

We turn to the United Nations for leadership. We look to the people in this great Assembly Hall to speak and to act for civilization, for freedom and for justice. An American politician, Hubert Humphrey, said it best:

> "The heroes of the world community are not those who withdraw when difficulties ensue, not those who can envision neither the prospect of success nor the consequence of failure, but those who stand the heat of battle, the fight for world peace through the United Nations".

I commend the President of the United States for coming to New York to consult and confer with those who represent the community of nations. This act is consistent with the finest and most admirable American tradition. If I can use Thomas Jefferson's words in the Declaration of Independence of the United States, I will say that President Bush's decision to address the United Nations on the subject of Iraq shows a "decent respect for the opinions of mankind".

On behalf of the people of Sao Tome and Principe, I declare our unconditional support for the effort to protect innocent people from acts of terrorism and to defend our populations from weapons of mass destruction. The United Nations must lead the way. The nations of the world must act together as one. It is a moral duty. Sao Tome and Principe offers what resources we have to assist in this noble effort.

But war and terrorism and violence are not the only threats to the lives of our people. More insidious, more pervasive and more deadly than even war itself is the poverty that kills many millions of men, women and children needlessly every year. Poverty is silent, but it is insatiable. It is unrelenting. I come from one of the poorest countries in the world. We are grateful to all those who have come to us and have helped us since our independence on 12 July 1975. I take this opportunity to thank all of you.

But we cannot, and will not, continue as we are today, without clean water, without health care, without electricity, without jobs, without schools and without even a primitive infrastructure or the capacity to build one. Sao Tome and Principe cannot be left behind. We do not want our neighbourhood in the global village to be a ghetto slum. We want to be part of the information age. We want to receive, to learn how to use and to master the technology that brings enlightenment, affluence and opportunity. Many years ago, another brilliant son of this country, the United States of America, Abraham Lincoln, said

> "A house divided against itself cannot stand. This Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free".

The same can be said today about the rich nations and the poor nations of our world. A house divided against itself — our house, this planet Earth — cannot endure half rich and half poor. We must do better.

Sao Tome and Principe now stands at a crossroads of development. We are strategically situated in the most important petroleum area in the world today: the deep water off the western coast of Africa in the Gulf of Guinea. With exploration success would come enormous wealth and potential power to my country. Sao Tome and Principe is therefore facing a moment of opportunity that African nations rarely encounter, or have historically squandered.

Just 100 years ago, my people lived in slavery. We picked cocoa off trees for the enrichment of distant European landowners, while we lived in chains, without decent housing, education or even basic human dignity. But we have come far in a very short time. My people are brave. We are strong and we are united. Sao Tome and Principe led the way in Africa in September 1990 in transiting from one-party rule to a multi-party system. My country is now a robust democracy, which enjoys some of the strongest stability in Africa. I am a product of my country's free and fair elections, having been elected just over one year ago, the second freely elected President since our independence in 1975. I promised my people that Sao Tome and Principe would be a model for oil transparency and sustainable economic development based on democracy, human rights, the rule of law and a diversified free-market economy. We invite you to share with us in achieving our goals.

I would now like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the following situation. We are today congratulating two countries on their entry as full members of the United Nations. But the task of achieving universalism in the United Nations has, unfortunately, still not been completed. I take this opportunity to pay special tribute to another country, with a population of more than 20 million inhabitants, which has achieved admirable economic and social progress through democracy, but which the international community continues to fail to recognize as an independent and sovereign nation. I am referring to the Republic of China on Taiwan. Sao Tome and Principe hopes, and urges, the Organization of United Nations to resolve this case soon as a matter of justice and to declare and accept Taiwan as an independent and sovereign nation.

Having said that, I turn again to the United Nations to say that the final challenge is perhaps the most difficult challenge facing the Organization, namely, to save the Earth itself. I appeal to those who fuel the factories of globalization and who drive the engines of progress and economic development. You are the ones who endanger the planet with your pollution. You are the ones who cut down forests, who burn the fossil fuel, who poison the oceans, who destroy the atmosphere and who warm the planet. You are the ones who can lead the world to develop cleaner technologies, more efficient uses of natural resources and effective ways to restore our land, air and sea. There is no time left.

The people of Sao Tome and Principe live on two small islands in the Atlantic Ocean. If sea levels rise from global warming, my beautiful island home will disappear beneath the waves. We know better than most people that if we spoil our homeland we have nowhere else to go. We must live with the waste that we make, and we cannot quickly grow back the trees that we cut. If we cut down the trees that shade and protect our food — the banana trees, the cocoa trees — we will starve. If we put poison in the water and chemicals in the earth, we will die. Whatever we do to bring prosperity to our land, we must do it in a way that respects the water and air and flora and fauna that make up our islands' environment. We must find a way to make progress that supports and sustains life rather than destroying it. The planet Earth is like Sao Tome and Principe in that respect: it is nothing more than an island in the universe. We must take care. We must do better.

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe for the statement he just made.

*Mr. Fradique Bandeira Melo de Menezes, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Item 9 of the provisional agenda** (*continued*)

**General debate**

**Address by Mr. Kjell Magne Bondevik, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway**

**The Acting President**: We shall continue the general debate. The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway.

*Mr. Kjell Magne Bondevik, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President**: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, His Excellency Mr. Kjell Magne Bondevik. I invite him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Bondevik** (Norway): Yesterday we stood united in remembrance of all those who lost their lives a year ago. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 were an attack on us all. We, the States Members of the United Nations made this clear a year ago in this Hall. Today we stand united in unwavering determination in the struggle against international terrorism and in the fight for the values, ideals and human rights that this great Organization is founded upon.

To succeed in our fight against terrorism, we must meet three crucial priorities. First of all, as terrorism is a global threat, our response must be global and comprehensive. To succeed, the global coalition to combat international terrorism must be maintained and further strengthened. We must continue our common efforts to prevent and eradicate terrorism, and to bring the perpetrators to justice. We must deny the terrorists access to weapons of mass destruction. We must continue to fight terrorism with all necessary means — political, diplomatic, legal, financial and military. We must ensure that we are fighting terrorism on our own terms, upholding the values, the rights and the freedoms that the terrorists so despise.

Secondly, we must strengthen our common efforts to maintain peace and security. A multilateral approach to global challenges requires relevant and effective institutions. Effective multilateralism calls for a strong United Nations and effective regional organizations. Norway stands fully behind efforts to strengthen the United Nations.

Thirdly, we must focus on root causes. I call on all Member States to fight extremism and fanaticism, to protect and promote human rights, to resolve conflicts and to eradicate poverty. That is why to invest in development is to invest in peace.

The Millennium Declaration set out the precise objectives to which we all are committed. We cannot afford to fail. Development must be built on a global partnership, in which all partners have clear responsibilities.

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg a week ago, we reaffirmed our commitment to the Rio principles and agreements, to the Millennium Goals, to Doha and to Monterrey. Together these agreements and declarations have given us a platform for renewed efforts towards our common goal of sustainable development. The Summit in Johannesburg also demonstrated that promoting development and protecting the environment must go hand in hand. Now it is up to us to make it all happen. Making it happen requires that we commit to precise and ambitious aims within the most pressing areas of concern. We tried to do so in Johannesburg, especially in the areas of water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity.

Making it happen requires investment in people: education, respect for human rights, the empowerment of women, and the empowerment of the poor. We need more equitable sharing of wealth within and among nations.

Making it happen requires courageous and enlightened leadership. Good governance is indispensable for sustainable development.

Making it happen requires strong international institutions, both to monitor and to act on behalf of us all.

Last but not least, making it happen requires financial resources. I urge the leaders of industrialized countries to make speedy progress towards the 0.7 per cent target for official development assistance. Norway intends to increase development assistance to 1 per cent of its gross domestic product by 2005.

The cycle of violence in the Middle East must be broken. We must all help to bring the conflict out of its deadlock. Israel has a legitimate right to self-defence, but a human disaster is unfolding before our eyes in the Palestinian areas. I urge the Palestinians to deal effectively with the terror. The terrorist attacks must end. I urge the Government of Israel to recommit itself to the political process while halting military operations and withdrawing its forces. Only a political process aiming at an independent Palestinian State and security for Israel can lead to peace.

As the country holding the chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, Norway is working with other donors to help rebuild economic and social infrastructure, while ensuring reforms in the Palestinian areas through our work in the established Task Force on Palestinian Reform.

We must continue our assistance in the years to come in the troubled and war-torn country of Afghanistan. We condemn the recent attacks against the lawfully appointed leaders of Afghanistan. The fight against the remaining groups of terrorists must continue. I pledge Norway's continued support to

Afghanistan. As the country holding the chairmanship of the Afghan Support Group, we have focused on the need for both humanitarian assistance and long-term reconstruction aid. A sustained international presence is essential. Winter is approaching, and as many as 6 million people are threatened with famine. We must also ensure the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of girls and women.

Iraq must address the unresolved disarmament issues in accordance with Security Council resolutions. This means immediate and unconditional cooperation with United Nations weapons inspectors. It is up to the Iraqi leadership to allay international fears and to prove that Iraq does not possess weapons of mass destruction.

It is up to Saddam Hussein to step out of isolation and bring Iraq back into the world community. Political and diplomatic efforts to achieve these goals have not yet been exhausted. Iraq must immediately comply with United Nations demands. The responsibility for non-compliance lies with Iraq alone. Further action by the international community must be rooted in the United Nations.

The international community must stay fully engaged in resolving the conflicts that still prevail in many parts of Africa. Parties to armed conflicts must continue to show political will and ensure that diplomatic progress is translated into real results on the ground, including in the Great Lakes region. Too many have suffered for too long from armed conflict.

In the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea, we have seen that progress is possible when the parties and the United Nations work closely together. The search for peace and stability in the Horn of Africa must also focus on resolving the conflicts in Somalia and Sudan.

Over the years, Norway has been actively involved as a facilitator in the settlement process of a number of armed conflicts. In Sri Lanka, we have witnessed significant progress over the past few months. A ceasefire agreement between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam came into force at the end of February. The agreement has laid the foundation for direct political negotiations, which will begin in Thailand next week.

Norway is strongly committed to the protection and promotion of human rights. Human rights are the platform for enabling people to choose and to develop their full potential. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, openness and democracy are values and principles we share. However, common values and principles are of little value if they do not lead to concrete results to the benefit of the individual.

Many of the problems we are facing are directly related to the fact that the very human rights and values we have all committed ourselves to are not being lived up to. This we see in Burma, and in other countries as well. As leaders, we have a responsibility to protect our citizens. We must focus on human security and protection from violence. Civilians are targeted or used as instruments of intimidation and terror. Women and children are increasingly vulnerable. Relief workers and others who volunteer to help people in need are subject to deliberate attacks and acts of violence. Our commitment to human security means that we must effectively apply international humanitarian law.

The entry into force of the Statute of the International Criminal Court is unprecedented. The Court represents a decisive step towards the end of impunity for the most serious crimes against humanity. We need an independent, effective and credible Court. We must work together to promote wide adherence to the Rome Statute. The goal must be a universally accepted International Criminal Court, so that no perpetrator of mass killings or other crimes against humanity and can feel safe.

Our resolve to promote social development, economic growth, democracy and human rights is the strongest means we have at our disposal in the fight against poverty and injustice, as well as in the long-term struggle to eradicate terrorism. We must use the full spectrum of means and measures to secure democracy and opportunity for every person on this planet. Only then can we hope to create a world in which there will be no more horrendous acts of violence, extreme aggression and terrorism.

The multilateral system of cooperation can only be as strong and assertive as Governments want it to be. We have a common responsibility to make it strong. We cannot think collectively and then act alone. Nor can we think in isolation and expect to act effectively together. That is why we need a strong United Nations.

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Kjell Magne Bondevik, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Carlos Mesa Gisbert, Vice-President of the Republic of Bolivia**

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by Mr. Carlos Mesa Gisbert, Vice-President of the Republic of Bolivia.

*Mr. Carlos Mesa Gisbert, Vice-President of the Republic of Bolivia, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Carlos Mesa Gisbert, Vice-President of the Republic of Bolivia, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Mesa** (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate Mr. Jan Kavan on his deserved election as President of the General Assembly at this session. We wish him every success. I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, whose efforts to promote peace and cooperation among nations are invaluable. Yesterday, in this city, we remembered the victims of a horrendous attack that was the very image of intolerance and fanaticism and revealed the darkest drives of human nature. I was deeply moved by this event and feel duty bound on behalf of my compatriots to express our pain, sorrow, and solidarity with those lost loved ones, and to all the citizens of the United States at this time of affliction.

This terrible episode in history ought, however, to prompt us to rethink a number of dogmas concerning the current world paradigm for development, dogmas that prevent it from being sustainable over time, and which, like a dangerous mirage, may lead the whole of humankind into a collapse that could jeopardize our common future.

I say this from the standpoint of a country, which, in its small way, is joining the collective endeavour to solve key problems that involve the fate of the whole planet. I am also convinced that it is in the poor countries of the world that the destiny of all is at stake. What we do, but above all what is done by those who possess more, and have put into effect a specific vision of society and of the economy that prevails today, shall determine whether our path will be one of hope or of catastrophe for all.

On 9 April 1952 — 50 years ago — Bolivia took the lead in a revolution that sought to democratize politics and end economic, social and ethnic exclusion, in order to attain a fairer national community. For the past 20 years we have kept that democracy functioning and we have been a pioneer nation in regulating our economy. Today, this process based on stability and dialogue is continuing.

However, all that has been done is still insufficient. The road that lies ahead is very long, and we must travel it amidst crises and turmoil from which we have been unable to extricate ourselves. The social and economic problems we face are serious. Much of what we have achieved could be destroyed by pressure exerted by those, who in spite of everything, have been marginalized and excluded. This situation is rooted in overwhelming poverty, the unfair distribution of wealth, and the loss of faith in politicians, associated with corruption and the lack of answers to pressing daily problems.

Our team became the Government of Bolivia as a result of a popular vote only thirty-six days ago, and we are committed to tackling these risks and challenges with resolution. We are doing this within the framework of a new democratic landscape. The election of 30 June 2002 established a new parliament that is diverse; this took place without violence or dramatic disruption and within a context of democratic and political maturity. Its main effect has been to begin to dismantle the walls of exclusion, on the basis of the recognition of others and tolerance and respect for different visions of the world.

For the first time in our history, an essential part of Bolivia's population, the Quechuas, Aymaras and Guaranis, are represented in fair proportion. A pluralistic legislative branch in ethnic, economic, political and social respects is a promising setting for courageous dialogue about our ongoing problems. Our unswerving resolve is that this dialogue should be real and productive, because it will help us to find a way of working together on the political and social levels, while seeking to resolve these crises and working sincerely to break the long-standing social exclusion of indigenous people and discrimination against women, children, and older persons.

I would like particularly to mention the resolve of our Government to make combating corruption a state policy. Only genuine and resolute efforts in this area

will make it possible for Bolivia to overcome one of the greatest impediments to development, one that threatens to destroy the essential foundation of our society. This resolve is part of a historic course followed, despite their different positions, by two parties in Bolivia: the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement and the Revolutionary Left Movement. Their leaders, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada and Jaime Paz Zamora, have understood that, at such a time, it is necessary to set aside legitimate party interests and long-standing political differences in order to build a project of responsibility vis-à-vis Bolivia. This is the only response possible for our nation at such a historic moment. This decision led to an alliance that has given rise to Plan Bolivia aimed at tackling the crisis by means of an ambitious programme of public investment that will stimulate the economy, encourage private inputs, create jobs, and reduce social inequities by favouring the most vulnerable sectors of our society.

Plan Bolivia also seeks to respond to the complex challenges of globalization, redefine the role of the State in promoting sustainable development, respond to local and regional demands, and establish a full rule of law with robust and credible institutions.

We know that we are not alone in this; we have seen such ideas elsewhere in recent decades. In spite of this, we urgently require our efforts to be backed by the international community. Bolivia has undertaken with determination the struggle to combat illicit drug trafficking as a moral imperative, in which we truly believe; but, in doing so, it has paid a high price in terms of human lives, economic effects, and violent social conflict. It is only right that those countries where drug consumption has greatest impact — demand as you know is the key factor in this cycle — give us support in proportion. We continue to fulfil our commitments. But we urgently call on the international community to fully endorse the concept of shared responsibility, which has been fostered and promoted in this forum more than once.

A combination of internal efforts and international support to attain reasonable levels of sustainable social and economic development must be reached through a new logic that reformulates all of our earlier ideas of progress and development.

Our afflicted Latin America was yesterday the hope of the planet and today is a continent caught in an emergency situation, with widespread social pressure, and economic collapse and facing a dangerous threat of an international domino effect. From its modest position, our country wishes to help halt these trends by being an example of how creative and democratic solutions can be used to address problems and overcome differences. This prompts us to emphasize that the most effective international aid is that which respects the decisions and plans of the countries that must use them. Imposing strict and unilateral recipes usually generates more problems than it solves.

If equity is one of the first demands of humankind today, there is no better system than that of equitable international trade. Poor countries demand access for their products to the markets of the rich countries under adequate conditions. This is one of the key points of nexus of poverty and social tensions in the most disadvantaged countries and their population. That is why the Andean Trade Preference Act constitutes a step forward; although only conditional, it shows the will of a friendly nation to modify a still unfair relationship.

We must understand free trade from a new standpoint, where the rules of the game are designed rationally to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, a situation that has already reached scandalous levels. It is unacceptable for prosperous nations to impose limits on us, while they are not prepared to apply them within their own territories.

I cannot conclude this intervention without reaffirming that recovering our status as a country with a coastline on the Pacific Ocean constitutes an important factor of our foreign policy.

This claim, which we have made for the past 123 years, is not the product of stubbornness or whim; it is related to our insufficient economic resources and to the enormous geographical barriers that affect our competitiveness. The lack of direct access to the sea constitutes an obstacle to our growth and to the welfare of our citizens. The recovery of sovereign access to the sea is not only a matter of justice, but an ineluctable need for which we shall continue to seek the solidarity and support of the community of nations, and even more so now that century-old conflicts of this nature have been resolved in this new century.

Bolivia is part of the world and, through vigorous participation within its region, will continue to contribute to a profound process of reflection regarding the type of global society that we must, wish to and can

build, based on its experiences and its own formulas for integrating and for making its own society participative.

We are probably experiencing one of the most difficult moments since the end of the cold war and it has become necessary for us to be able to imagine a different and better world in which no idea is untouchable and no hope for change is smothered.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Vice-President of the Republic of Bolivia for his statement.

*Mr. Carlos Mesa Gisbert, Vice-President of the Republic of Bolivia, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**The Acting President**: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable William Graham, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada.

**Mr. Graham** (Canada): I would like, through you, Sir, to congratulate Jan Kavan on his election as President of the General Assembly and to assure him of our delegation's cooperation as he undertakes his important responsibilities this year.

Yesterday, people the world over paused to remember the victims of the tragic events of one year ago. I had the opportunity of attending the interfaith service yesterday, where the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General spoke movingly about how the commemoration of that event must reinforce this institution's vocation as the forum dedicated to world peace.

Canadians entirely subscribe to the sentiments that were there expressed. The attacks of last September were a cruel and devastating blow to the United States and, indeed, to us all. I am proud to say that Canadians stood in solidarity with our closest ally at that terrible moment. When the terrorists struck that day, they were also attacking the very principles of international law, security and humanitarianism that are embodied in the United Nations Charter. We believe that our ultimate response to the challenges of 11 September is thus to rededicate ourselves to our beliefs and to the principles upon which the United Nations was founded.

(*spoke in French*)

Now, more than ever, the main challenge for each of our countries and for the United Nations is to manage our interdependence. Environmental degradation and endemic poverty, the proliferation of disease and epidemics, the increasing threat of terrorism and organized crime — these are serious, complex issues that no one nation can confront alone. To succeed, our countries must work together, while also drawing on the expertise of civil society. Such interaction is a formidable challenge and one that the United Nations is best suited to meet.

Recognition of our interdependence in no way threatens our respective sovereignty. In fact, it gives each of us even more tangible means to act and to succeed through the sharing of our information, resources and initiatives.

The principles of multilateralism are articulated with vigour and resolve in the Millennium Declaration, which assigns a decisive role to the United Nations Charter — and rightly so, for it is much more than our constitution. Indeed, it is our heart and soul. It reconciles national interests with the highest moral and ethical standards that must govern the actions of each State. For us, the Charter is the key to unlock the door to the world of peace, security and justice that we hope to build.

The terrorist threat leads us to work together and, tragically, illustrates the extent of our interdependence. It demonstrates the urgency of finding solutions that are equal to the task at hand and whose effectiveness hinges on new partnerships among our countries. Our reaction to terrorism must be steadfast, to be sure, and we must make no concession to the agents of terror, but if we want our reaction to be truly effective, it must enhance both national security and respect for basic rights. In fact, democratic governance and security find their most solid foundation in societies in which rights and freedoms are respected and where, as a result, dissidence more often than not takes constructive, rather than violent forms.

What is more, the fight against terrorism challenges us to find ways to open our hearts and minds to the diversity of our world, its cultures and its religions. Now more than ever, we must promote dialogue, understanding and tolerance with respect to other people. In this way, we will help to eradicate at its source much of the pain that all too often translates

into rising hatred, extremism and fanaticism of all sorts.

Multilateralism has definitely proven its worth over the past year. For example, dozens of countries have offered their resources and experience to Afghanistan as members of the coalition against terrorism or of the Afghanistan Support Group. They have also contributed to the various United Nations programmes seeking to establish political stability and representative Government.

The G8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, concluded at Kananaskis in June, is another concrete example of our joint commitment to battling terrorism and other threats to peace. Canada, as Chair of the G8, was a strong advocate of this major effort designed to strengthen international security and strategic stability. Canada will continue to work to make this initiative a success.

At all times, Canada is ready to offer its support wherever it is needed and we encourage the international community to continue to do likewise. We also believe that the multilateral approach is useful in addressing the obvious challenges posed by sustainable development. In this regard, the consensus that emerged from the Monterrey Conference calls on all countries to work together to forge broader partnerships between developed and developing countries.

In this regard, the situation in Africa cries out for action. For too long now, inaction has taken a heavy toll in terms of human suffering. However, hope is beginning to shine through. The New Partnership for Africa's Development, devised by African leaders determined to meet the challenges of self-development and endorsed at Canada's urging-during the G8 summit in Kananaskis, seeks to provide the people of Africa with conditions founded on good governance and democracy, while ending their marginalization and offering them the chance to achieve prosperity.

As we meet here today, the Israeli-Palestinian crisis remains at its all too familiar impasse, despite the fact that everyone knows what is needed to restore peace. We all know that the targeting of civilians must stop, that the security of Israel must be assured, that settlement-building must end, that the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people must be met, that the Palestinian Authority must reform itself democratically and that the peace negotiations must resume. We know, in sum, that a road to a peaceful future must built, a future in which two independent, viable, sec and democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side side in peace and security.

Canada calls on the Palestinian Authority and Government of Israel to start back on the road to pea The people and the Government of Canada w accompany them and support them every step of way.

We also meet here today in an atmosphere deepening tension caused by Iraq's continued flouti of the will of the international community and by differing opinions that prevail around us on how address this situation and bring the crisis to a close. there be no doubt: at the origin of today's tensions the persistent refusal of the Iraqi Government comply with its obligations to us all under Secur Council resolutions. For the past seven years, Iraq refused to demonstrate that it has abandoned chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programm and it remains even today unwilling to do so. But there also be no doubt that bringing Iraq i conformity with its international obligations must the work of us all acting together.

We believe that our ability to find a solution this challenge, one that is consistent with and, inde that reinforces the international framework that have so painstakingly constructed since the devastating World War, will define this generation a create precedents that may determine the futu direction of the world. It is with this in mind t Canada welcomes the powerful message delivered h today by President Bush affirming his countr commitment to work with the Security Council resolving this serious threat to our collective peace a security.

We therefore urge Iraq to seize this opportun without delay, and to grant immediate a unconditional access to United Nations weapo inspectors in compliance with its Security Coun obligations. The onus is clearly on the Government Iraq to take this step now. The onus is equally on us ensure that our international institutions emerge fr this crisis reinforced and strengthened.

Such institutions may well be new, as in the c of the International Criminal Court (ICC), a body t has the potential to ensure the integrity of

international legal system, upon which so much depends for the peaceful resolution of our differences. This week I had the privilege of attending the inaugural meeting of the Assembly of States Parties here in New York with many in this Hall and was encouraged by the depth of international political and public support that exists for this important new body.

The people of the world want an end to impunity. They insist that their leaders no longer turn a blind eye to gross violations of international humanitarian law like those we witnessed in the past century. Immunity from the law is simply no longer acceptable. The States parties to the ICC Statute are more than willing to put into action the proposition that we can best enforce rules of law that we have arrived at by our common accord — those indeed that we are willing to have invoked against us as well. For the 79 States parties that attended the Assembly of States Parties and the many observer States close to ratifying the Rome Statute, our objective remains to work resolutely and cooperatively to make the Court a reality.

The International Criminal Court represents a major change in the way the world works. The times we live in demand many such innovative approaches. For example, in response to a call from the Secretary-General, Canada, along with others, launched the independent International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. Its landmark report, entitled "The Responsibility to Protect", has shifted the parameters of the debate from divisions over intervention toward agreement on the responsibility of a State to protect its people. The report holds that sovereignty entails responsibilities as well as rights: that sovereignty is responsibility. When States are unable or unwilling to afford protection to their own people, the international community has a responsibility to step in temporarily and to provide that protection. The report represents, in our view, an opportunity for us to reinforce the United Nations in its collective security mission. It also provides an occasion to affirm the fundamental norm-building role of the United Nations and to find better ways to prevent and, where necessary, alleviate human suffering.

Part of our shared responsibility to raise the credibility of multilateral institutions is to address their shortcomings, including those of the United Nations itself. We are greatly encouraged that the Secretary-General and his Deputy, Louise Fréchette, are proposing far-reaching organizational reforms. They can count on Canada's support. We also support reform in other areas, notably in respect to the nearly moribund Disarmament Commission and its glacial progress on issues of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, where recent gains such as the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons and the negotiations on an international code of conduct on missiles are being overshadowed by a myriad of compliance problems.

Certainly, there are problems with multilateralism and the institutions we have created, but that should not cause us to doubt the desirability of an effective rules-based system. Our objective should be to address these shortcomings where we see them and reform what we must, and in the process answer the criticisms of those suspicious of an interdependent world. We will persuade the sceptics only by building better institutions to implement the international rule of law and globally arrived-at solutions to our common problems.

Let us therefore embrace cooperation, not division. Let us expand our sovereignty by pooling it. Let us be partners in the larger enterprise of building peace and freedom. No one country can meet all the challenges of our times on its own. Let us have confidence in our common humanity. Let us make the United Nations our principal instrument of peace. I pledge to the Assembly today that Canada will spare no effort in so doing.

**The Acting President** (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Dominique Galouzeau de Villepin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France.

**Mr. Galouzeau de Villepin** (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to pay tribute to the remarkable work of the Secretary-General, who, through his outstanding personal qualities and sense of dialogue, gives our Organization unparalleled influence. I congratulate Mr. Jan Kavan on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. I also congratulate Switzerland on its admission to our Organization, and Timor-Leste on its forthcoming admission.

A year ago, to our stunned horror, New York and Washington were struck in unprecedented attacks. From now on no one now can disregard the dark side of the world: international terrorism that combines archaism with technology, and shifting underground

criminal networks with a growing risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

These formidable opponents insinuate themselves into the heart of the world's complexity. They play on frustrations and resentment, hatred and fears. They foil our plans, they know how to find weak spots and turn our weapons against us. No, the world is definitely not suffering from an excess of power. To the contrary, it is suddenly discovering its extreme vulnerability.

Faced with these threats, the temptation to forge blindly ahead could emerge. That would be a serious mistake. Force cannot be the sole response to these elusive adversaries that are constantly changing.

The example of Afghanistan shows this. Mobilizing the international community enabled us to overthrow a retrograde totalitarian regime that harboured and supported the Al Qaeda network and dealt a harsh blow to terrorist infrastructures. That was necessary, but it is not enough. We must now rebuild; we must help the Afghan people, maintain our efforts over the long term, and continue our work to bring about stability and democracy, but also to dismantle the drug economy and the trafficking it fuels.

The fact that force alone is often futile is one of the characteristics of our age. We live in a world that is interdependent, where cause and effect may be distant, indirect and unpredictable. Let us take care that our interventions do not give rise to new frustrations, produce new imbalances or spark fires that we cannot put out.

The case of Iraq is typical of this new situation. It is a country that has defied the authority of the Security Council and flouted international law for years. It is a regime that poses a grave threat to security, particularly the security of the peoples of its region, because of the risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Its conduct is the direct cause of the great suffering endured by its people.

Is the international community concerned? Of course it is. Can it continue to tolerate this situation? Definitely not. Should it act? Obviously: the status quo cannot go on. France's determination to obtain compliance with the law is absolute.

We must act, but we must do so effectively. We must act, but without risking results opposite to those we seek. We must take care not to exacerbate a situation that is already very disturbing. We must act, but there are many traps. Intervention that is politically or legally ill-defined or poorly mounted would not garner the broad support necessary; it might galvanize public opinion in the region against it, and the regime in Baghdad, which is isolated now, could benefit; lastly, it might exacerbate tension in the Middle East and beyond at a time when we should, on the contrary, redouble our efforts to return to the path of dialogue and peace.

How are these traps to be avoided? How are we to succeed? There is only one way, and it is demanding. It is the path of responsibility — collective responsibility. The world now is one of interdependence. Its stability concerns us all. All of us must contribute to it.

The necessary measures must be adopted by the international community after in-depth and transparent consideration. Any temptation to engage in unilateral preventive action would be dangerous. We must take care to avoid any suspicion of bias or injustice. This is the only way to ensure that any action to enforce law and restore security does not add to insecurity. That is the best guarantee of effectiveness.

That is why, in the case of Iraq, France advocates a démarche made completely legitimate by collective deliberation. It requires two successive steps. First, we must together reaffirm the need for United Nations inspectors to return and demand that Iraq comply at last with its obligations under the Security Council decisions taken since 1991, and do so according to a definite timetable. That is the objective of the international community. It is also in Iraq's interest. If Baghdad persists in its refusal to allow the inspectors to return unconditionally, then there must be consequences. The Security Council should then decide on the measures to be taken without excluding any option. Responsibilities would be clarified. The world must be able to act. But it must also be coherent and effective, in a sustained way. That is today the real challenge to our values, and to our democracies.

I recently travelled to the Middle East, the Balkans and Afghanistan. I realized the strength of the aspirations and hopes for peace. But I also saw how the efforts and energies of various parties need to be united and centred on a collective ambition.

No Power can today assume sole responsibility for world equilibrium. The world aspires to be structured around poles of stability and progress. In addition to the United States, the European Union is

naturally destined to form one such pole, along with Russia, China, Japan and India, among others. In future each actor must make its contribution to the effort. It is a common project that we must build.

That is the ambition that inspires the European Union, and France's action within it. The Union affirms its role on the world stage in the service of peace and prosperity. It is acquiring the appropriate diplomatic and defence instruments. With a view to major enlargement, the Union is also committed to genuinely re-making its design. That is the purpose of the Convention on the Future of Europe, guided by the principles of democracy and effectiveness for a future Europe. In that way, the Union will contribute to the stability of the continent and beyond. Finally, the European model reconciles in a unique way the requirements of social cohesion and economic performance to further a common plan, while respecting the diversity of all. For all those reasons, I am convinced that Europe's voice offers elements for addressing the major challenges of our time.

Today, power in all its aspects must be shared. It is essential to listen to diverse approaches and points of view. A dialogue among cultures is essential. Only this will enable us to understand the main issues today by taking into account the history and aspirations of every people and every country. Only this can prevent us from having too narrow a conception of the world based on ignorance and on fear of the other. Only this can guide us in putting humankind back at the centre of our concerns and at the heart of our action and our shared commitment.

Sharing means responding to the requirement of solidarity. Extreme poverty, famine, epidemics and financial crises are factors contributing to disorder and fomenting instability. Terrorism feeds on these things. Generosity must be the corollary of power. It is our political and moral duty. It is also in our own interest.

Accordingly, France has pledged to augment its development assistance, which will increase by 50 per cent over the next five years.

Owing to its geographic proximity and historical and cultural ties, my country has a deep friendship for Africa. It feels a special responsibility. That continent, more than others, needs the solidarity of the international community in the difficult trials it is experiencing: the too-numerous conflicts that persist; the return of the spectre of famine; the economic difficulties; and the tragedy of AIDS, which today strikes nearly 30 million Africans.

Yet Africa is rich in potential, rich in the enthusiasm of its young people and in the energy of its civil society, and rich in memory, in tradition and in a treasury of wisdom from which we all have much to learn. Important efforts are under way today to advance human rights, democracy, the fight against corruption, and favourable economic and social policies for strong and balanced growth. The establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development attests to the continent's willingness to take charge of its development, in the context of a renewed partnership with the industrialized countries. Let us recognize and support those efforts.

In particular, we must help Africa to move forward on the path of conflict resolution in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and the Sudan. Those tragedies concern us all, because today there are no more localized crises. Instability spreads. The international community must mobilize.

In the Great Lakes region, the agreements signed at Lusaka, Pretoria and Luanda must be implemented. They must lead to the withdrawal of all foreign troops present in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to the disarmament of foreign armed groups, to reconciliation and to a return to peace.

With regard to Western Sahara, it is good that the Security Council, in its most recent resolution, resolution 1429 (2002), gave Mr. James Baker the time to work to bring the parties closer together. That time must be used to make progress.

We must stay engaged in the Balkans, where the progress made this year must be consolidated in Kosovo, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Linking the Balkans to Europe through the rule of law and democracy is, more than ever before, our common aspiration.

In the Middle East, we must emerge from the impasse and restore hope. The situation will worsen as long as the parties remain prisoners to the logic of violence. There is urgency to act. The Palestinian Authority must use all available means to prevent and curb terrorist actions. With a view to the creation of an independent, viable and democratic Palestinian State,

based on the 1967 borders, it must pursue its reforms, particularly in the institutional context.

For its part, the State of Israel, while it legitimately wishes to defend itself against terrorism, must do so with respect for international law. The security imperative cannot by itself take the place of policy. Settlement-building must cease, and the Israeli armed forces must withdraw from the occupied territories, as demanded by the Security Council. Measures must be taken quickly to improve the now alarming humanitarian and social situation of the Palestinian people.

On the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) and the principle of land for peace — which all the Arab countries, meeting in Beirut, agreed to recognize at the initiative of Saudi Arabia — the political process must be relaunched with the aid of the "quartet". We support the convening of an international conference at an early date. The objective must be a just, comprehensive and lasting peace; a peace based on the coexistence of two States within secure and recognized borders, guaranteeing security for the Israelis and offering the Palestinians a normal life with dignity; a peace based on a comprehensive settlement of the regional conflict between Israel and its neighbours.

The attention that we pay to regional crises must not distract us from the responsibility that we must assume in the face of global challenges. The United Nations is playing its full role in the fight against terrorism. Let us do likewise in the other great struggles of our time.

Let us fight tirelessly against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The President of the French Republic has proposed that the Security Council meet at the highest level in 2003, during the General Assembly, with a double mandate: to review non-proliferation policy and to give it a new impetus.

Let us mobilize all actors for sustainable development in a renewed partnership, in conformity with the commitments made at Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg. The time has come to strengthen concrete cooperation to permit access by all to basic resources such as water and energy, to basic social services such as education and health, and to food security. Let us also call for the ratification and full implementation of the Kyoto Protocol on climate change.

Let us establish true global governance of sustainable development and give it the necessary coherence. France proposes the creation of an economic and social security council and of a world environmental organization to give all countries — especially those of the South — the possibility of making their voices heard on those issues.

Finally, let us fully exercise our responsibility to defend and promote human rights. These are universal. Progress, often fragile, must be encouraged. Violations, often so numerous, must be punished.

Let us strengthen the authority and the universality of the International Criminal Court to enable it to ensure that the most serious crimes at the international level do not go unpunished. This new tool is essential to build a more just and democratic world where the principle of responsibility is fully respected.

Through ambitious conventions, let us provide better protection, as we did for children, for the disabled and for the victims of forced disappearance and torture. Let us fight against corruption. Let us commit ourselves to the negotiation of a universal convention against human cloning for reproductive purposes, as proposed by France and Germany.

Yes, the principle of collective responsibility is at the heart of the international system. It is at the heart of United Nations action. In order to play its full role, the Organization must pursue its reforms. In particular, we must increase the representativity of the Security Council by enlarging both categories of membership. France supports the aspirations of Germany, Japan and India in particular.

The United Nations is the keystone of the world order. The generous and strong ideas that presided over its birth, just after a world conflict that pushed the limits of barbarism to the unspeakable, retain all their currency. The contemporary world is complex, confusing and unpredictable. It is urgent that we forge among nations a new alliance, a community of destiny. That is our future; that is our chance. Through our actions, let us respond to the expectations of the world's peoples.

*The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.*

United Nations A/57/PV.4

# General Assembly

Fifty-seventh session

*Official Records*

4th plenary meeting
Friday, 13 September 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

*President:* Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

**Agenda item 119** (*continued*)

**Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations** (A/57/390/Add.1)

**The President**: I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/57/390/Add.1.

In a letter contained in that document, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/57/390, Mauritania has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

*It was so decided.*

**Address by Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Slovenia.

*Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Kučan** (*spoke in Slovenian; English text provided by the delegation*): It was 10 years ago, immediately following the admission of newborn Slovenia to the United Nations, that I addressed the Assembly for the first time. I did so with great pride, with faith in the United Nations and with gratitude for the chance given to my country to present to the international community its own views on current world affairs, with a sense of responsibility for its actions not only towards its own citizens, but also towards the entire international democratic community.

Looking back at the past decade, I can say without the slightest reservation that, without the United Nations, life on our planet would be even more uncertain, social injustice would be even more widespread and global disparities in prosperity even more marked. There would be even more systematic violations of human rights in many States and even more wars.

In spite of its acknowledged weaknesses and inefficiencies, this world Organization has done great work. I daresay that, throughout its membership, Slovenia, too, has contributed to this through its own active pursuit of the principles of the United Nations. It received widespread recognition for the work it accomplished as a non-permanent member of the Security Council; this is something of which we are particularly proud.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

02-58836 (E)

The United Nations decisions at the historic Millennium Summit have already placed the Organization in the future realm of our global world. The violence committed by States against their own peoples is now faced with a new force: the ethic of the democratic world. This ethic does not recognize absolute State sovereignty or absolute non-interference in internal affairs when systematic mass violations of human rights, through State terror, occur.

The principle of humanitarian intervention is the beginning of an important process of implementing global ethics in the governance of this globalized and increasingly interdependent world. It is also a clear message to the authors of international law and to international judicial institutions. It is one of the pillars of the next phase of international law, as is the International Criminal Court. No one any longer has responsibility only towards themselves. State sovereignty is no longer untouchable. Everyone, in their actions, also has a responsibility towards global society, for in an increasingly integrated world, the actions of one easily affect others.

Certain measures of the global community of States in response to the challenges of the twenty-first century, such as the special session on the future of children, the World Summit Sustainable Development and the forthcoming meetings on a better future for Africa are signs that the United Nations is gaining in political and moral clout as an Organization common to all States and as an organization capable of finding the strength to carry out the announced internal reforms.

In that context, Slovenia supports the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the Secretary-General's proposed reforms. That these efforts are urgently needed became particularly apparent last year on 11 September, a day of tragedy not only for New York, Washington and the United States in general, but for all humanity. The entire democratic world joined in the fight against international terrorism. Slovenia also did so with great resolve. No one who cared for humanity just stood aside.

But as time passed, it became increasingly clear that even the best military weaponry of the anti-terrorist coalition could not reach down to the social roots of this horrendous evil. This evil is craftily taking advantage of the apathy and the anger of people and States without a future. This evil is trying to regain its strength by playing on religious, cultural and civilizational differences, intertwined with the great social rifts in our global world. Evil, understood in this way — an evil that threatens to use the most atrocious weapons of mass destruction — can be eradicated only through concerted action by democratic States under the umbrella of the United Nations.

It is precisely in this context that the authority and credibility of the United Nations are on trial. The Organization has proven itself capable of reaching common positions and decisions even on the most demanding issues. We are capable of defining common positions, even concerning the actions of those who do not respect these common decisions. The United Nations now must have the ability not only to speak of those positions, but also to implement them through concerted action. That is the responsibility that all of us face today.

Globalization, with all of its positive and negative aspects, is a given fact. Let us do more to transform that fact into something that is in keeping with the needs of the people and the rule of individual and collective human rights. Certainly, this cannot be achieved by trying to drive peoples, States, cultures, religions and civilizations away from their own identities, by trying to place them under the common denominator of a single global identity. That would signify the collapse of our human world, bearing disastrous consequences. Today's world, where borders between States — and particularly between civilizations — are growing less rigid, is a world full of plural identities and of clearly defined national, cultural and religious entities that are beginning to open up to one another.

This plurality calls for a unique integrating factor. That factor can only be a global ethic based on the ancient principle of reciprocity among human beings: do unto others as you would have others do unto you. In times of interdependence among each and every one of us, such values are particularly important. The global ethic should be developed based on this value, for it is a value with deep roots in the world's age-old great religions and civilizations. Based on this value, we will be able to strengthen universal human rights and global social justice, and without that justice, one cannot expect the world to be a safe and peaceful place offering people justified hope that our planet belongs to all of humanity.

International terrorism has unveiled the negative aspects of interdependence among our societies. We must now do more to strengthen the positive aspects and to create new ones. The environmental, economic and ethical challenges humanity is facing today require a radical rethinking of global governance and the establishment of global responsibility. This is so much more so since we are faced with the breakdown of regulation and control in global trade, with an inequitable global development machinery that generates misery and humiliation, and that manifests a relentless preference for economic and financial logic over ecological, social and human demands. A positive alternative must be found to these negative aspects of our interdependence.

Present generations of statesmen, politicians, academicians and civil society all have a duty to lay the foundations of a global ethic and a United Nations that offers stronger guarantees for a world that is no longer so fiercely divided into peoples, nations and States with the right to a future and those who are robbed of that future by the technological and social gaps of our planet.

I am convinced that there will be a kinder future for our world and a more creative future for the United Nations. It is with this in mind that I most warmly welcome our new Member, Switzerland, and soon also, Timor-Leste. These two new Members illustrate very clearly all the disparities in our globalized world. I firmly believe that their work in this Assembly will help transform the United Nations into a community for the entire world.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Slovenia for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Milan Kučan, President of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

## Address by Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Ghana.

*Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Kufuor**: A year ago the entire world watched in horror as terror was visited on the city that plays host to the United Nations. It is a city that has welcomed people from all corners of the world for hundreds of years and that still remains for many an irresistible magnet as a place of opportunity.

We watched — all of us, from our different parts of the world — as the terrible events unfolded. If there had been any doubt before, that experience convinced all of us that our world had indeed become a global village. Modern technology enabled all of us simultaneously to watch the events as they unfolded. The devastation and drama of those events have since forcefully brought grief to our individual hearts, across continents, races, religions and political ideologies. If ever there was any doubt about mankind's shared humanity, that catastrophe conclusively dispelled it.

A year on, we still bear the deep scars; we have not forgotten, and we dare not forget, because what happened was not directed exclusively against New York and the people of the United States. Nationals of many countries, including Ghanaians, perished in that tragedy. What happened was indeed an affront to civilization itself.

Throughout the ages, whenever humanity has found itself confronted with great danger, it is the sense of unity and common purpose that has pulled us through. This is no exception. Indeed, the resilience of New York and of the people of the United States has brought about a spirit of solidarity and generosity that is just as awesome to behold as the tragic event itself.

It is for that reason that I am optimistic about the future. The work of the United Nations and of non-governmental organizations, and the growing acceptance of the principles of good governance, human rights, tolerance for a diversity of views and the rule of law around the globe make me optimistic. In my mind's eye, I can already see, in the near future, a world in which there is more openness, more forbearance and less categorization of mankind.

Our nations have been brought together by science, technology and conscience, as well as by

adversity, and the acknowledgement of interdependence among peoples has become a reality. Now we are moving from the concept of "beggar thy neighbour" to one of "prosper thy neighbour", which should become the hallmark of the global village.

Sadly, the continent of Africa still lags behind in many spheres, as poverty and disease plague the continent. But there is a new spirit abroad among the African countries. Africa has never wanted to be perceived as the "scar on the conscience of the world". We do not want to be the object of pity and charity, and we do not want to provide the grisly images of war, disease, ignorance, famine and poverty for the world's television screens. It was largely as a result of our determination to shed that unacceptable image that many a country on the continent, on attaining independence, desperately rushed into one or another untried ideology or economic model that tended only to worsen the woes of self-doubt left by exploitative and unconscionable colonialism.

Today, under the auspices of the African Union, the rejuvenated continental grouping, our countries have resolved to tackle the continent's problems to enable us join the mainstream of world development. We have pledged to endeavour to be honest with each other, and under the Peer Review Mechanism there will be no hiding behind claims of sovereignty in order to tolerate abuses of human rights in individual countries.

We are determined to strive for democracy and good governance, not because those are fashionable buzzwords but because we are convinced that they are the surest — if not always the most rapid — path to the development that we require to uplift the conditions of life of our peoples.

The technology exists and the human expertise abounds in the world to end the degrading poverty and debilitating diseases that sap the confidence of the peoples of Africa. This world Assembly must rally to help Africa in its genuine efforts to tap into the intellectual, financial and moral resources of the globe, to be a worthy partner within it. The concept of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) provides the framework within which African countries can be assisted to become part of the mainstream. It provides a great opportunity for world leaders to move from rhetoric to purposeful action.

Education has served as a route out of poverty for people throughout the ages, and it should be the way out for us in Africa as well. We have an essentially young population that is ready and anxious to learn. Fortunately, information and communications technology provides the means to help Africa leap-frog into the modern world. Let the world community therefore assist Africa to join in the mastery of this powerful tool.

Ours is a well-endowed continent. Our raw materials keep the manufacturing engines of the world running. The reasons for investing in Africa, therefore, need not be charitable; investment can be based on sound economic considerations. The market potential of a thriving and economically viable Africa will do wonders not only for Africa but also for the world economy at large.

I am optimistic, because I think of what Ghana and the African continent have contributed to the development of the world. We have provided, and continue to provide, personnel in various fields to all kinds of institutions in the world. Ghanaian academics and citizens from many other African countries can be found in many top universities and companies around the world, contributing significantly to the development of cutting-edge enterprises. Africans are in various jobs and are making a considerable contribution to the running of organizations, including the United Nations. I would like to take this opportunity to express Ghana's — and Africa's — deepest gratitude to the international community for the confidence it showed in re-electing Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, to a second term.

In all these endeavours, however, the missing link for Africa has been the solid and sustainable framework for good governance to support the purposeful evolution of prosperous and stable nations on the continent. It is for this reason that Ghana, like other African nations, is trying to put its house in order to take advantage of emerging prospects. We are nurturing our infant democracy, and the citizens are passionately committed to the defence of the Constitution. We are putting in place mechanisms to support good governance. The institutional framework is being created to ensure an efficient public sector that can interface effectively with an enterprising private sector to create wealth and eliminate poverty.

But Ghana, like other developing countries, cannot alone achieve the dramatic rate of growth that is required; there must be significant injections of outside

investment into our economy. We need affordable and sustainable sources of energy to be able to achieve rapid development. We need the partnership, markets and support of the international community to sustain our development. That is the message of NEPAD. We are working to develop a positive economic environment to receive and integrate foreign direct investment as a tool for regional development. That is the sure path for Africa to connect effectively with the global markets.

Ghana acknowledges its share of responsibility to protect the resources that Nature has given our country as the heritage of all humankind. The world cannot and must not operate on the basis of the survival of the fittest. Weaknesses caused by history and other factors must be taken into account and, above all, our common humanity must inform all our international dealings.

Ghana sees a lot of potential in globalization. We wish to recommend, however, that an organization such as the United Nations should provide the regulatory framework to ensure that the benefits of globalization are more equitably distributed. The opportunities are enormous for those who can take advantage of the move to more liberalized markets and increased flows of investment capital. But nature did not make all people equally competitive. That global organization must, therefore, evolve systems of safety nets to guarantee all humanity an acceptable minimum degree of dignity and respectability. The United Nations must rise up to this challenge.

For the pure and proper development of the global village, certain initiatives by this Organization must be commended and encouraged. Ghana is in full support of United Nations effort to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We urge Member States to join in the early implementation of the Programme of Action that was adopted in 2001 to stop this trade, from which most of the instability in Africa stems.

Secondly, women and children need our protection. It is for that very reason that in Ghana we have created a Ministry for Women and Children's Affairs to enable us tackle issues that affect those two groups. We have embarked on a vibrant educational campaign and are pursuing policy initiatives that will create awareness and reduce the incidence of discrimination against women and help improve their livelihoods. We are also striving to ban child labour and enforce free and compulsory education for all children up to the junior secondary school level as enjoined by Ghana's national Constitution.

Thirdly, I must mention the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which is threatening the survival of our countries. The spread of the disease is compounding our difficulties even further. I wish to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his interest, and for the setting up of the Global Fund to help us fight the menace. The Ghana AIDS Commission is constantly seeking new ways to change attitudes at all levels towards the disease, and we seek to learn from the experience of others in combating it. We support the efforts of the international community to provide more affordable antiretroviral drugs for the most needy.

At this stage, permit me to congratulate Switzerland on its accession to membership, and East Timor on its forthcoming accession. That Switzerland has at long last joined the Organization confirms its universality. They are welcome.

The tragedy of 11 September has certainly made a difference to the world. It has shocked the world into uniting to condemn it. Let those of us who have accepted the honour and privilege to speak on behalf of our peoples determine that we must strive for a world of greater tolerance and of more justice, a more humane world in which law and order are fully respected both within nations and in the international community. Eleven September must be used to underpin the vital communal spirit that must motivate the global village. We would then be able to say that we had left the world a better place than we found it.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Ghana for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic of Burundi**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Burundi.

*Mr. Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic of Burundi was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic of Burundi, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Buyoya** (*spoke in French*): It is an honour for me to address the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. Let me first of all, Sir, discharge a pleasant duty on behalf of my delegation and on my own account, and extend to you my warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. You may rest assured of the support and cooperation of the delegation of Burundi towards the success of your difficult and important mission. I also pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo, for the able manner in which he led the work of the fifty-sixth session.

Furthermore, I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the United Nations, and to pay tribute to its Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his support to the people of Burundi.

Nor can I fail to thank the Security Council for its tireless efforts to find a lasting solution to the crisis in Burundi. Through its two visits to Burundi, the latest on 5 and 6 May 2002, the Security Council has shown its solidarity with the people of Burundi in its quest for peace.

During my address, I shall inform the Assembly of the political situation in Burundi, and of how far we have come in the peace process; I will then go on to speak of the challenges we still face and will conclude my statement with some comments on international issues.

Following the establishment of transitional institutions beginning 1 November 2001, the political climate in Burundi has greatly improved. The political forces that had taken part in the Arusha negotiations and signed the Peace Agreement now form the institutions of the Republic: the Government, the National Assembly and the transitional Senate.

Advocating dialogue in an armed conflict is not always an easy task, but a sense of responsibility gives us no alternative. We are pleased to recall from this rostrum that we have chosen the option of peace through dialogue and the procrastinations of others involved in no way shake our conviction.

Since we are on the right path, we request the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the African Union and the countries of our subregion to maintain their support for our quest for peace by assisting the mediation activities — led by Nelson Mandela, assisted by Presidents El Hadj Omar Bongo and Benjamin Mkapa and Vice-President Jacob Zuma — in order to persuade the protagonists to sign a ceasefire agreement without further delay. Indeed, certain provisions of the Arusha Agreement are not being applied precisely because of the ongoing violence. That is why the negotiation and signing of a ceasefire is a crucial stage in hastening and ensuring the success of the many reforms to be undertaken.

The task ahead is enormous, but it can be accomplished. The smooth functioning of institutions is a guarantee of success, while daily experience demonstrates the serious commitment of the political partners and is the basis of our optimism.

While it is true that there are reasons for hope, it is equally true that the challenges to the peace process are genuine and could compromise our path to peace if they are not satisfactorily met in the short term. The violence which the rebels continue to force on the Burundian people is a major challenge not only to us, but to the United Nations, whose primary mission is to maintain peace throughout the world.

We take this solemn opportunity to reiterate our request to the entire international community to compel the Burundian rebels to renounce violence. If diplomacy does not succeed, all other means must be used in order to prevent this rebellion from taking hostage a peace process being led today by a Government formed on the basis of negotiations and which now enjoys international legitimacy. Peace will come to the Great Lakes region when every country there is living in peace. To that end, the effort must be both individual and collective. That is why my country is prepared to continue making its contribution to creating a better climate with all neighbouring countries.

The second major challenge is the reconstruction effort. After nine years of crisis, the Burundian economy has been sorely tried. The population has become further impoverished, all economic parameters have been destabilized, and our external indebtedness prevents us from resorting, as we have done in the past, to the international financial marketplace. Here again,

we ask our traditional partners to give substantial support to our peace efforts. Promises have been made that we hope will be kept in the near future. Indeed, the repatriation of refugees, the resettlement of displaced persons and the rebuilding of damaged infrastructure will require substantial financial resources.

As members of the human community, Burundians are also following the concerns of the world, which, sadly, are many and to which we are constantly seeking solutions. To cite but a few, Burundi welcomes the creation of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS and, like other countries that have been deeply affected by the pandemic, has requested that access to affordable medicine be improved until such time as researchers are able to develop a vaccine against this scourge, which threatens all humankind, especially in Africa. In the same vein, my delegation supports the idea of creating a world fund to fight poverty and also welcomes the proposal to establish a world fund for the environment.

Even closer to home, our peoples await the concrete results of the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, at which the community of nations reaffirmed the need to work together towards equitable and viable development for current and future generations. We also welcome the establishment of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. This testifies to the unequivocal commitment of the United Nations to enhancing and focusing efforts on behalf of the most vulnerable groups of countries.

On the African continent, the New Partnership for Africa's Development is a major source of hope and, as such, deserves the support of the international financial institutions and of the community of donors.

Along with the poverty that is affecting millions of human beings, another fearful danger is that of terrorism. A year after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, the world remains in a state of shock and is seeking ways to stem the scourge of international terrorism. To that end, Burundi is committed to implementing the provisions of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which provides the blueprint for a collective fight against terrorism.

The great challenges of poverty, environmental degradation, international terrorism, armed conflict and incurable disease require all nations, rich and poor, to recognize international solidarity as the necessary means of survival for us all. The United Nations is therefore called on to meet this challenge, especially by carrying out the necessary reform of its organs — the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council — in order to make them more complementary and effective in the interest of all.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Burundi for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic of Burundi, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Alvaro Uribe Vélez, President of the Republic of Colombia**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the President of the Republic of Colombia.

*Mr. Alvaro Uribe Vélez, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Alvaro Uribe Vélez, President of the Republic of Colombia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Uribe** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I greet you, Your Excellency Mr. Jan Kavan of the Czech Republic, President of the General Assembly, which I address for the first time.

A short distance from here, on the fateful day 11 September, 2,801 citizens of the world died. In Colombia, violence claims the same number of victims every month. Forty three million Colombians, peace-loving people, are experiencing one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Every year Colombia buries 34,000 of its own, victims of violence. We have lost 10 per cent of our youth. Last year the country registered the highest homicide rate in the world: 63 per 100,000 inhabitants.

During the past five years, we have experienced 8,000 acts of collective destruction, more than those recorded for any other cases of violence in the world; 280 villages were the object of guerrilla and

paramilitary attacks with serious consequences for local civilians and the armed forces. The terrorist attack carried out during my inaugural ceremony killed 21 ordinary people. Two million people, 40 per cent of them children, have been forcibly displaced under pressure from violent groups. That is the equivalent of the simultaneous displacement of the communities of Washington and Manhattan. During the past five years, 16,500 people have been kidnap victims. Yesterday, six children were kidnapped and one of them is still being held.

Just as the 11 September terrorist attacks moved the entire world and triggered justified and universal condemnation, mankind should be shaken by attacks such as the one carried out by guerrillas on 2 May 2002, in Bojayá, a village of 1,000 inhabitants. They killed 117 civilians who had taken refuge in the church.

Such violence makes our people poorer every day, discourages investments, hampers economic growth, diverts valuable resources and prevents us from overcoming our economic and social backwardness. Violence absorbs four per cent of my country's gross domestic product. Hijackings, kidnappings and assaults are daily occurrences on our main highways, including the one that joins our two largest cities. Imagine a similar situation between Brussels and Paris, or New York and Boston.

Today, Colombians are making a great effort to address the problem with public order policies, State reform aimed at defeating corruption and political chicanery and greater economic growth and social investment. The main objective of our democratic security policy is to restore the rule of law. Security is not for persecuting real or imagined ideological enemies or maintaining a one-party regime. The aim of democratic security is to protect all citizens in a pluralist nation, open to fraternal and creative debate.

Democratic security is for all Colombians and is intended to ensure that peasant farmers are not driven from their land; that members of the business community are not kidnapped; that journalists are not threatened; and that the missions of bishops, priests, nuns, preachers and educators are respected. It is also intended to ensure that union leaders can freely exercise their actions; political leaders can move about without fear; and that human rights advocates can work without threats.

As civilian commander-in-chief of the arm forces, I am committed to rigorously observing a respecting human rights. Failure in this regard m lead to appeasement, but it would never bri reconciliation. Our emergency measures do not restr human rights, but rather demand the observance rules, for example with regard to the mobilization citizens, in the name of freedom of movement, prevent explosives from continuing to be transported assassinate people.

We respect debate. The security policy that being implemented is not aimed at silencing criticis but rather at confronting violence. That policy irreversible.

The number of military and police personnel Colombia is low: 3.9 per 1,000 inhabitants. New Yo has 42,000 police officers, while all of Colombia h 75,000. We must strengthen our armed forces. We ha decreed a wealth tax that will be paid by high-incor businesses and citizens. The additional tax reven should amount approximately to 1 per cent of the gro domestic product.

As part of the implementation of the democra security policy, our Government has called on t solidarity of a million citizens to cooperate voluntari with the armed forces and justice officials. An essent element of a socially oriented constitutional State citizen support for its legitimate institutions. constitutes the individual's commitment to t community, without which the State loses its soc nature. We must break citizen fear of the guerrillas a paramilitaries, and we must create community-bas links with democratic institutions. To a large extent, t efficacy and transparency of the armed forces depe on citizen cooperation.

The Colombian problem jeopardizes t democratic stability of the region. We need the world assistance to resolve it. I ask for the world's he because my Government has made the decision defeat terror and to ensure that these four years do n end in a renewed victory for crime or in new eviden of State and societal vacillation before the arrogance the violent.

It is imperative that the sources of terr financing be eliminated. That is why we must conqu drugs and kidnapping.

There is concern about weapons of mass destruction within the United Nations, and we share that anguish. But we must understand that drugs have a massive capacity for destruction, equivalent to that of the most feared chemical weapons.

We are determined to eliminate them. We request the same level of commitment from the world. We cannot continue with timid half-actions and decisions.

*Miss Clarke (Barbados), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

While we delay action, more drugs are produced and traded by terrorism. I call on fellow members: do not send us your weapons. Eliminate your markets for drugs and chemical precursors. Help us with aerial interdiction and drug seizures in the Pacific and in the Caribbean. We need resources to pay our farmers to destroy drugs and work to restore our forests.

Last week, Carlos Enrique Arenas, a 29-year-old pilot serving with the Colombian navy — father of a 2-year-old daughter and a second child on the way — and his co-pilot, Roberto Enrique Guardo — the father of three young children — disappeared in the ocean. The helicopter they were piloting crashed after intercepting a speedboat carrying more than two tons of cocaine. Sacrifices such as this demand the support of all nations to defeat drugs, especially since until now we have only managed to seize 20 per cent of the drugs that are shipped from our country.

A United Nations resolution — Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) — orders the seizure of bank accounts, investments and other assets of individuals who commit terrorist acts. That resolution has remained a dead letter in those countries where the resources that finance terrorist acts in Colombia circulate.

My Administration's commitment to security is not opposed to dialogue. Quite the contrary, we want dialogue. This is why we have requested the good offices of the United Nations through a special adviser of the Secretary-General. That is the way to begin a serious peace process, one that starts with the cessation of violence.

The United Nations Charter tells us that dialogue with those who commit acts of terror is possible only if those acts are halted. The pain of thousands of Colombians caused by the kidnapping of their loved ones — the list includes former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt; several members of Congress; members of state assemblies; the Governor of my own state, a former minister and tireless worker for peace; members of the armed forces, and hundreds of ordinary people — demonstrates that we need humanitarian action that does not fuel violence but that leads us along the path of reconciliation.

The world has plenty of analysts of Colombian problems, and plenty of critics of our society and our successive Governments. We need less rhetoric and more action — that is, real contributions to solving the problem. We call for effective cooperation, because the violence is financed through the international drug trade and is waged with weapons not made in Colombia.

Like other nations, we suffer dire poverty, injustice, low investor confidence, high debt and a budget deficit. We have always honoured and will continue always to honour our international financial commitments. We are making unprecedented efforts to freeze operating expenditures and to increase taxes. But we need significant bilateral and multilateral economic support to invest and to expand employment — to begin to pay the social debt. A victory over violence will trigger economic growth and create resources for social development, which in turn will consolidate peace.

One thought: the price of a pound of Colombian coffee was once more than $3; it is now around 60 cents. International banks and cooperation agencies should redouble their commitment and resources in Colombia. The money will not to be used for wasteful expenditures or to salvage bankruptcies, but will rather be invested, in the interest of the poor, to ensure governability.

The people of Colombia are proud, hard-working, democratic and sensible; their spontaneity has not been stifled by their suffering. The nation has the most solid democratic tradition, widely recognized long-term economic performance, a highly diversified industrial base, a productive structure increasingly geared towards international markets, and an enormous potential for small democratic enterprises.

Representatives of the peoples of the world: with your commitment and support, and with our own determination, Colombia will be freed from the slavery of violence and will be more prosperous, with greater justice.

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Colombia for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Alvaro Uribe Vélez, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Denis Sassou-Nguesso, President of the Congo**

**The Acting President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of the Congo.

*Mr. Denis Sassou-Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou-Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Nguesso** (*spoke in French*): This session of the General Assembly is beginning in a context that is still deeply affected by the memory of the painful events that struck the United States, and especially our host city, just a year ago. So I shall begin by paying tribute to the memory of the victims of the attacks of 11 September 2001. This sacrifice is a cruel reminder of how fragile our world remains, exposed to the most unimaginable threats. Humankind needs solidarity, and the Congolese people reaffirms here, through me, its solidarity with the people of the United States.

The election of Mr. Jan Kavan to preside over the work of the fifty-seventh session is a tribute to his beautiful country, the Czech Republic, and to his reputation as an outstanding statesman whose experience and knowledge will inspire and guide our work.

To Mr. Han Seung-soo, President of the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, we express our earnest thanks for his excellent work. Likewise, we express to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, our profound gratitude and our wishes for success in the noble mission that he is brilliantly carrying out at the head of the Organization. Finally, we welcome and congratulate the Swiss Confederation on the occasion of its admission to the Organization. Undoubtedly, that is a major event for the United Nations, which thereby continues to increase its effectiveness.

Two years ago, during the Millennium Summit, held in this Hall, the international expressed its wish to see established throughout the world a climate of peace and security favouring broad prospects for international cooperation, with a view to sustained world development. During that historic meeting, the world's leaders adopted a Declaration whose ambitions were commensurate with the high stakes. In particular, they committed themselves to reducing by half by the year 2015 the proportion of the world's population living in conditions of extreme poverty.

Since the Millennium Summit, the international community has convened a number of meetings whose objective was to improve the lives of our peoples through policies of shared management, of solidarity and of preserving the future in various areas involving the responsibility of our States. We should periodically evaluate our progress, and the current session offers us that opportunity.

The absence of peace — war and insecurity — is gravely undermining humanity. Unfortunately, no region in the world has been spared. Because of irrationality, the Middle East, a veritable powder keg, is unravelling before us. The international community must become further involved in the talks between Palestinian and Israelis in order to put an end to the cycle of violence that has ravaged that part of the world for so long.

Our own subregion, which covers the Economic Community of Central African States — over which we preside — longs for peace and security. Having suffered years of war and instability, Central Africa has only one desire: to emerge quickly from this infernal cycle. In that connection, we should firmly seize every opportunity available to us in order permanently to reverse old trends.

In Angola, the 4 April 2002 signing of a Memorandum of Understanding as an addendum to the Lusaka Protocol offers a glimmer of hope. We welcome the signing of that agreement and, in the same spirit, make an earnest appeal to the international community to give its full support to the populations of those countries faced with dire poverty.

The situation in Burundi remains worrisome despite the formation of a Government of national

unity. We ask the parties to go even further and to begin honest negotiations that could give South African mediation, which we encourage, every chance of success.

With regard to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we welcome the peace Agreement of 30 July 2002, signed in Pretoria between the heads of State of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of Rwanda. We also see as a positive development the agreement reached a few days ago in Luanda between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. By the same token, we encourage the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo aimed at concluding an inclusive agreement involving all the sons and daughters of that brotherly country.

In the light of the foregoing, I should like to ask the Assembly to devote all necessary attention to the activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. That Committee has just held its 18th ministerial meeting, in Bangui, Central African Republic, and will report to the Assembly during the current session. Its recommendations deserve broad support from the international community. Central Africa needs to regain peace and stability in order to play the major role warranted by its immense potential.

Most of the conflicts that afflict our planet have their roots in the extreme poverty from which populations — especially in developing countries — are suffering. Their poverty is marked by underdevelopment, with all its evil effects, which prevent them from adapting to the new context of the international economy.

It is with the goal of stopping the cycle of dire poverty that Africa has established, along with the new African Union, an original plan for its development: the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). NEPAD is Africa's contribution to assisting in its own development. This development choice shares the spirit of the new partnership defined in March 2002 by the Monterrey Consensus and the goals of the Rome World Food Summit and of the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Since 15 October 1997, when the transition period in Congo began, my country has been facing major challenges.

The first of these challenges — to conclude the transition and the electoral process — has been met. This political development, in spite of the setbacks and difficulties encountered, has led, thanks to the determination of the Congolese people, to the establishment this year of new democratic institutions following free and fair general elections.

The achievement of that first objective has given us ample opportunity better to take up the other challenges and priorities ahead of us, namely the strengthening of peace and security, the consolidation of national unity and democracy, the promotion of human rights, economic reconstruction, and the revitalization of international cooperation.

Our determination to engage in active and dynamic international cooperation is reflected in particular in our effective participation in Central African activities through the Economic and Monetary Community of Central African States and the Economic Community of Central African States, of which Congo holds the presidency; in our vision of a common future for the peoples of the subregion; and in our resolute commitment to the Partnership for Africa's Development.

It is with great pleasure and conviction that I convey to the Assembly the optimism and high hopes of the Congo — a State that has reclaimed its place in the community of nations and intends to keep it. It wishes to serve as a genuine haven of peace, well-being, prosperity and modernity for current and future generations.

It is with current and, in particular, future generations in mind that we have resolved, along with five other Central African States, to wage a widespread campaign to preserve forests, animal life and biodiversity in the Congo River Basin.

We welcome the determination of the United States of America, France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan and South Africa, as well as that of major international organizations, specialized non-governmental organizations and forestry companies to take an active part in what we call the Congo Basin Initiative.

It is also with the goal of speeding up the implementation of the objectives of sustainable development and of a healthy environment that my

country is committed to acceding, in the coming months, to the Kyoto Protocol.

The Congo hopes to be a State that unreservedly abides by the universal principles and values of human rights, peace, fundamental freedoms and good governance.

There can be no doubt that this vision is shared by all of our States. It is the basis our of Organization, whose principal objective is to work for peace and freedom throughout the world.

The United Nations must tirelessly and resolutely work daily for the triumph of peace and freedom. Let us not forget this. We cannot forget that the United Nations was create to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". It was created essentially for peace.

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of the Congo for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Denis Sassou-Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of the Republic of Madagascar**

**The Acting President**: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Madagascar.

*Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of the Republic of Madagascar, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.*

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of the Republic of Madagascar, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

**President Ravalomanana** (*spoke in French*): The Madagascar delegation, which I have the honour of leading for the first time at this session of the General Assembly, is delighted to congratulate Mr. Jan Kavan on his well-deserved election to the presidency of this session, and we wish him every success.

To his predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, we express our most sincere appreciation for having led the fifty-sixth session to a successful conclusion through dedication and skilful leadership.

The dedication of our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to the attainment of the objectives of the United Nations deserves our full appreciation and gratitude.

The admission of the Swiss Confederation as a new Member of the United Nations is for Madagascar a source of profound satisfaction. This friendly country is a living example of a peaceful and multicultural society based on values of democracy and freedom.

Here today, in the framework of the commemoration of the tragic events of 11 September 2001, we wish to express our solidarity with the people and the Government of the United States. We reiterate our condemnation of such terrorist acts, whose consequences are incalculable. A global phenomenon without borders, terrorism is considered to be the most dangerous enemy of the new millennium. It can be eradicated only through harmonious international cooperation.

In this regard, we wish to pay tribute here to the efforts of the United Nations, acting through the Counter-Terrorism Committee created by the Security Council, for the implementation of Council resolution 1373 (2001), and we commend all other regional initiatives adopted to combat this plague. To fight terrorism, countries such as ours will need special technical assistance in order to implement this resolution of the United Nations, as well as other international treaties.

The persistence of areas of tension and conflict around the world, especially the Middle East, demands the reinvigoration of the United Nations to make it more effective in responding to the needs of the international community, particularly in maintaining international peace and security. To pursue this critical objective, we must now more than ever strengthen our efforts to make the Security Council more democratic, more representative and more transparent.

There is no doubt that the United Nations provides us with the ideal framework for creating conditions that encourage States and peoples to choose peace over war. In this regard, Madagascar wishes to congratulate Timor-Leste on its independence after a valiant and heroic struggle by the people of that

country and successful efforts by the United Nations to re-establish peace there.

Furthermore, Madagascar encourages the mediation efforts undertaken by the United Nations for the settlement of conflicts in a number of countries throughout Africa. In this context, I wish to reiterate the profound gratitude of the Malagasy people for the role the United Nations agreed to play in resolving the post-election dispute that threatened Madagascar. This crisis is now over and Madagascar is now experiencing a new era full of hope.

We are convinced that sustainable development requires the consolidation of the rule of law and the establishment of good governance. Towards this end, the new Government is taking all appropriate measures for the sound and rational management of public finances and of international assistance. Madagascar has given the fight against corruption the very highest priority. We have also taken the initiative to insure that an effective policy is developed and applied in order to tackle this evil on all fronts. Madagascar supports General Assembly resolution 55/61, through which our General Assembly decided to create an ad hoc committee entrusted with negotiating a future legal instrument against corruption. Our country is awaiting the conclusion of such an instrument in the near future, in order to fill the gaps in its own legal system. We look forward with considerable interest to the high-level Conference in Mexico in 2003 for signing a convention against corruption.

The rapid and sustainable development of Madagascar is the major and fundamental objective of the present Government, in order to extract the country from the scourge of poverty, a source of instability that erodes democratic values. In this context, Madagascar is committed to a pro-active policy aimed at recovery for rapid and sustainable growth of its economy, in which the private sector will be the driving force.

As we see it, the key to development is partnership between the public sector and the private sector, in which the Government works together with private companies and non-governmental organizations solely for the benefit of the people. We invite private businesses to invest in Madagascar. The returns on those investments will be beneficial both to them and to the Malagasy people.

As an essential component of development and of peace, education is our priority of priorities. Malagasy children will live fully in the world of the twenty-first century, which is characterized by advanced technology of information and communications. Thus, Madagascar welcomes the adoption of Assembly resolution 56/258 calling for a World Summit on the Information Society to be held in 2003 and in 2005. The world community will then have a unique opportunity to discuss information and develop the opportunities offered by digital technologies, in particular in Africa and in the least developed countries.

The Republic of Madagascar is ready to do everything in its power to put the country back on the path of development. This will be done with the support of the international community in the framework of mutually advantageous cooperation.

I take this opportunity to express our gratitude and our appreciation to all of Madagascar's development partners, bilateral, regional and multi-lateral, for their valuable contribution to the re-launching of economic activity in our country.

Faced with multiple challenges in our era, a time dominated by poverty and underdevelopment, international cooperation is no longer a choice; it is an absolute necessity for the survival of humanity. Those factors that diminish us as human beings: poverty, HIV/AIDS, famine and illiteracy, cannot be eliminated without a true spirit of solidarity, guaranteeing a better future for all people. Let us not forget that the preamble of our Charter announces a new humanity with peoples and human beings living in dignity and security. Towards that end, they must have access to fundamental human rights, the right to health care, the right to education and to culture, and the right to a decent income. Our mission, to reduce poverty everywhere in the world, has become today more important and more urgent than ever before.

The slowdown in economic activity, on a global scale, following the attacks of 11 September 2001, has worsened impoverishment and plunged millions of individuals into a state of dire need. In this grim context, globalization could play a vital role in the fight against poverty, as long as the countries of the north and the south are offered the same opportunities of development.

In order for globalization to truly benefit humankind, it must take into consideration the interests

of all countries the world over, in an international economy of sharing.

Global interdependence and better international economic cooperation must be entirely accepted, if we are to obtain the objectives of the Millennium Declaration. A collective awareness to develop a real partnership for development is indispensable in order to make a reality of that objective. In this spirit, Madagascar welcomes the consensus reached at the International Conference On Financing For Development, which was held in Monterrey.

In the same context, Madagascar urges the international community to give firm and concrete support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and to give that support both bilaterally and multilaterally. With the objective of giving an important role to the private sector in development, Madagascar fully and without reserve supports the principles and objectives underlying NEPAD. In the coming months, I intend to make Madagascar one of the leading countries of NEPAD, because I am sincerely committed to good governance, the development of infrastructures and energy, education, new technologies, access to the markets of developed countries and the protection of the environment.

The alarming conclusions of a United Nations Environment Programme report entitled "Africa Environment Outlook", as well as the recent weather-related disasters in Central Europe and Asia, require the international community to develop a new code of ethics for the conservation and effective protection of the environment. Our Government will make the protection of our precious environment one of our main priorities. Furthermore, Madagascar hopes that the Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg a few days ago will give new impetus to our collective determination to offer all countries an opportunity to develop in a way that benefits their inhabitants, their environment and our shared heritage, the Earth.

By some standards, Madagascar is a poor country. However, it is rich in unique natural resources and in educated human resources. Above all, its population is attached to democracy, family values and belief in God.

We would like today to express our desire to cooperate with the United Nations as a partner for the reconstruction of Madagascar. By working in partnership, we will ensure for our country a future of hope. The entire world will come to know us by our strengths, not our weaknesses.

Working together with the United Nations family, Madagascar is ready to make its own contribution to building a global village in which all countries receive equal treatment and have equal opportunities for full development — an indispensable condition for the establishment of lasting peace.

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the President of the Republic of Madagascar for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, President of the Republic of Madagascar, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Agenda item 9** (*continued*)

**General debate**

**Address by Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of the Republic of India**

**The Acting President**: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of India.

*Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President**: I have great pleasure in welcoming Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

**Mr. Vajpayee** (India) (*spoke in Hindi; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): I congratulate Mr. Kavan on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. I also extend my best wishes to Secretary-General Kofi Annan in this first year of his second term in office.

Two days ago, we commemorated the first anniversary of a terrible event that focused the collective global consciousness on international terrorism. Terrorism did not start on 11 September. It was on that day that it brazenly announced itself on the global stage, flaunting its immunity from distance and power.

As a country exposed to the depredations of terrorism for decades, India empathized with the pain of the American people, admired their resilience in coming to terms with the consequences and supported the bold decision to counter-attack terrorism at its very source.

The international community has taken some collective decisions in the global effort to combat terrorism and to choke off its lifelines. Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) contains the essence of these decisions. The Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee should now move beyond information compilation and legal assistance to enforcing compliance by States known to be sponsoring, sheltering, funding, arming and training terrorists.

In our South Asian region, nuclear blackmail has emerged over the past few months as a new arrow in the quiver of State-sponsored terrorism. Dark threats were held out that actions by India to stamp out cross-border terrorism could provoke a nuclear war. To succumb to such blatant nuclear terrorism would mean forgetting the bitter lessons of the 11 September tragedy.

As far as India is concerned, we have repeatedly clarified that no one in our country wants a war, conventional or otherwise. Nor are we seeking any territory. But absolutely everyone in India wants an end to the cross-border terrorism which has claimed thousands of innocent lives and denied entire generations their right to a peaceful existence with normal economic and social activity. We are determined to end it with all the means at our command. Let there be no doubt about that in any quarter.

Yesterday we heard the extraordinary claim in this Assembly that the brutal murder of innocent civilians in Jammu and Kashmir is actually a freedom struggle and that the forthcoming elections in that state are a farce, since they cannot be a substitute for a plebiscite demanded over 50 years ago. It requires an effort of acrobatic logic to believe that the carnage among innocents is an instrument for freedom and that elections are a symbol of deception and repression. If the elections are a mere fraud, why are terrorists being trained and infiltrating India at the command of the Inter-Services Intelligence Agency of Pakistan to kill election candidates and to intimidate voters?

If Pakistan claims to be a crucial partner in the international coalition against terrorism, how can it continue to use terrorism as an instrument of State policy against India?

*Mr. Nguyen Dy Nien (Viet Nam), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

How can the international coalition condone Pakistan-directed killings of thousands of innocent civilians — women and children included — to promote a bizarre version of self-determination? Those who speak of underlying or root causes of terrorism offer alibis to the terrorists and absolve them of responsibility for their heinous actions, such as the 11 September attacks on the United States or the 13 December attack on our Parliament.

Yesterday we heard yet another patently false and self-serving claim that in India Muslims and other minorities are the target of Hindu extremists. With 150 million Muslims, India has the second largest Muslim population in the world; greater than that of Pakistan. We are proud of the multi-religious character of our society. Equal respect for all faiths and non-discrimination on the basis of religion are not just part of our Constitutional obligations, but, as the whole world knows, they are the signature theme of India's civilization and culture.

We have to recognize that the developmental divide between the North and the South is becoming wider and deeper by the day. The challenges that face us are stark, and there is no alternative to having all countries of the world join hands to face them together.

Over the last decade, 10 million people have been joining the ranks of the poor each year. A quarter of the world's population lives in extreme poverty.

We have to find US$ 24 billion annually for investment in poor countries, if we are to achieve the World Food Summit goal of halving hunger by 2015.

The continuation of widespread poverty, at a time when unimaginable wealth is concentrated in a small social layer, is totally unacceptable. The twenty-first century has all the means to end this sad legacy of the past centuries. What is lacking is the political will among the developed countries to sincerely and speedily address the legitimate developmental needs of the developing countries, especially the least developed ones.

Casting an even longer shadow over this grim developmental canvas is global climate change, from which the poor will most suffer, though they contributed least to it. The recent floods and forest fires in Europe are a forewarning that the countries of Asia and Africa are not the only victims of the fury of a degraded environment. The Earth's atmosphere and biosphere know no national boundaries. The choice before the global community is stark: Either we take urgent steps to protect the environment or be prepared for far worse natural calamities.

Early this month, the Johannesburg Summit for Sustainable Development debated some of the linkages between poverty, trade, environment, national, international and corporate governance and global financial flows. We emerged from the Summit with some encouraging outcomes, but these fell well short of the demands of our time.

It has become a categorical imperative to understand and address man's developmental needs in their totality, and not in isolated parts. It is disconcerting that the highways of development are jammed with the noisy and unruly traffic of materialism and its brash cousin, consumerism. Human values have become mute bystanders in most political, economic and social activities.

The result of this imbalance between our material and non-material needs can never be happy for mankind. On the contrary, if we are guided by compassion, care, feeling for our fellow human beings, cooperation and other human values, we are bound to get the right solutions to every problem on our planet.

Humanity is crying out for a harmonious integration of the economic, social, political, environmental and spiritual dimensions of development. This task calls for the closest possible cooperation among nations and communities, with a readiness to accept the best from every cultural and spiritual tradition around the globe. The United Nations needs to take up newer and bigger initiatives in this direction.

In this Assembly, less than a year ago, and in the United States Congress the year before, I had extended India's offer to coordinate a comprehensive global development dialogue. I reiterate that offer today. If we are to achieve the development goals we have promised ourselves by 2015, we need such a dialogue urgently.

As we come together once again at the United Nations, at a time of new and diverse challenges, we should reflect on our collective commitment to the Charter, its purposes and principles. There is a growing perception, particularly among the weaker and poorer countries, that responses to issues of far-reaching impact often seem arbitrary and contradictory.

A common destiny is at stake. The world needs collective multilateralism. It needs the United Nations, the coming together and working together of all its nations in the development of a common and collective perspective.

Conflicts arise when there is no spirit of democracy within and among nations. A genuinely democratic framework enables us to respect alternative points of view, to value diversity and to fashion solutions responsive to the aspirations of people.

India's own experience as a hugely populated and diverse nation shows how complex problems can be addressed within a constitutional and democratic framework.

These values need to be assiduously nurtured in our societies, so that at least a future generation is rid of the scourge of poverty, intolerance, obscurantism and religious extremism.

Democratic societies are far less prone to ideologies based on violence or militarist yearnings, since they do not have their fingers permanently on the trigger of a gun. We have to be vigilant against threats to democracy worldwide arising from forces that are opposed to it, be they rooted in fundamentalist political ideologies or extremist religious dogmas.

All of us are aware of the challenges. Most of us are agreed that a stable global order has to rest on the four strong pillars of peace, security, sustainable development and democracy. We have to ensure that each of these pillars is strong and resilient.

We are conscious of our collective responsibility. It is the leap from this theoretical understanding to its practical realization that we have often failed to execute. We should not fail again. Our future generations will not forgive us if we do.

**The Acting President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of India for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of India, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan**

**The Acting President**: The Assembly will hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan.

*Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The Acting President**: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Koizumi** (Japan): First of all, I would like to congratulate Mr. Jan Kavan on his assumption of the Presidency of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. At the same time, I pay high tribute to Mr. Han Seung-soo, former President of the General Assembly, for his leadership.

I am pleased on this occasion to congratulate Switzerland on becoming a United Nations Member State. My congratulations also go to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, which declared its independence on 20 May. Japan heartily supports its admission to the membership of the United Nations.

The Peace Bell in the garden of United Nations Headquarters was presented to the United Nations in 1954 by the Japanese people with a prayer for world peace. It has been rung every year for world peace. The beautiful sound of the bell, which was made from coins collected from all over the world, reminds us of what the United Nations represents.

In order to ensure world peace and prosperity, we need to harmonize a range of efforts which encompass not only military measures, but also initiatives for the solution of poverty problems and the establishment of social infrastructures that will put an end to human rights violations. The United Nations should be a forum where the contributions of each and every State are consolidated and implemented in the most efficient manner. No single State or organization can accomplish this. Only the United Nations is capable of carrying out such a lofty task.

In this connection, I would like to refer to the issue of Iraq, which is of grave concern to the international community. Iraq must comply with all the relevant Security Council resolutions. In particular, Iraq must allow immediate and unconditional inspections and dispose of all weapons of mass destruction. It is important for the international community to continue to work together and to engage more strenuously in diplomatic efforts through the United Nations. In doing so, we must pursue the adoption of necessary and appropriate Security Council resolutions as soon as possible.

Terrorism remains a critical issue this year. Today, in addition to terrorism, I would like to take up other major challenges which the United Nations must address and to describe Japan's contributions in those areas, namely, the consolidation of peace and nation-building, the environment and development, and nuclear disarmament. I will also touch upon my ideas for the realization of United Nations reform, which is essential in order for this Organization to tackle these challenges successfully.

The first challenge is the fight against terrorism. Just after the terrorist attacks on 11 September, I visited ground zero. Seeing with my own eyes the magnitude of the destruction, I was speechless at the enormity of the terrorist attack. 11 September is a challenge not only to the United States, but also to all humankind. The prevention and eradication of terrorism are an important task for the United Nations and, indeed, for all Member States.

Japan calls upon all States to accede to international conventions related to terrorism. It is important to develop international norms in this area, such as a comprehensive convention on international terrorism and an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism. Safe havens for terrorists cannot be allowed. Japan will further strengthen its domestic counter-terrorism measures. Consulting closely with the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council, it will share its knowledge and expertise in counter-terrorism measures with those States that are in need of it. Japan will respond to threats where weapons of mass destruction might be used in acts of terrorism by actively joining the efforts of the international community to prevent the proliferation of these weapons.

The second challenge is the consolidation of peace and nation-building. Japan attaches great importance to extending post-conflict assistance for the consolidation of peace and nation-building to prevent the recurrence of conflicts. Having developed a mechanism to enable it to cooperate effectively in broader areas, Japan has entered a new stage in its cooperation with peacekeeping operations. This positive posture is manifested in its deployment since February of 690 Self-Defence Force personnel, mainly as an engineer group, to the peacekeeping operation in East Timor. Japan will enhance its cooperation in other areas as well, such as demining, rehabilitation of infrastructure, elections and the establishment of systems for internal security.

*The President returned to the Chair.*

Concerning Afghanistan, at the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan held in Tokyo in January, Japan strove to solidify the resolve of the international community. We are now preparing a programme to assist the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, which will give form to our proposed Register for Peace. My country is also contributing to regional reconstruction by developing an assistance project for the resettlement of refugees and displaced people in such areas as Kandahar.

In the Middle East, it is crucial that the vision of the peaceful coexistence of Israel and an independent Palestinian State materialize as early as possible. Japan will assist the reform of the Palestinian Authority, which is aimed at the establishment of a new State by the Palestinian people. We will do so particularly by providing technical assistance for democratization. Elections by the Palestinians are the first step towards nation-building and I believe that the international community should extend assistance to ensure their success. However, putting an end to the vicious circle of violence remains our most urgent task. Japan resolutely condemns terrorist acts by Palestinian extremists and strongly urges Israel to immediately withdraw its troops to the line of September 2000, halt its military operations and lift the economic closures in the autonomous areas.

In Africa, peace and stability are prerequisites for development. We are encouraged by the positive movements in that continent, such as the realization of peace in Angola and a partial ceasefire in Sudan. Japan will actively support the efforts of African States for conflict resolution and the consolidation of peace.

The third challenge is the simultaneous achievement of environmental protection and development. Towards that end, it is of course important to utilize all available financial resources and to develop human resources, which are the engine of nation-building. However, ownership by developing countries and their partnership with the international community, which supports their ownership, are also essential.

In this respect, we welcome the development of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the establishment of the African Union as manifestations of ownership by African countries. In order to help strengthen both African ownership and the partnership with the international community, and building on the results of the successful World Summit on Sustainable Development that took place in Johannesburg, Japan will convene the third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III) in October 2003. Also, in pursuit of sustainable development, it will host an international ministerial-level conference on water in Kyoto in March 2003. Japan will continue to participate actively in worldwide actions for environmental protection and development by providing expertise and taking concrete action.

Fourthly, I would like to touch upon the nuclear disarmament issue. I believe that Japan, as the only country in human history to have suffered nuclear devastation, has a significant role to play in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Japan will continue its efforts to realize a peaceful and safe world, free of nuclear weapons, as early as possible. To that end, we will propose a draft resolution entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons" at this session of the General Assembly, and we will redouble our efforts to achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

When addressing these challenges, we must ensure that the variety of measures taken by Member States are effectively coordinated. The United Nations must exercise its leadership in this endeavour. We, that is all Member States, must breathe new life into the United Nations by strengthening its functions through reforms. Next year, the debate on Security Council reform will enter its tenth year. I believe that we should

now focus our discussion on such questions as the number of seats on an enlarged Security Council. Japan intends to work hard to that end. In this connection, I would remind all Member States of the question of the "enemy State" clauses, meaningless legacies of the twentieth century, that remain in the United Nations Charter.

Since assuming office as Prime Minister in April 2001, I have proceeded with a series of reforms to enable Japan to respond appropriately to the new era. The United Nations also must continue to reform itself so as to respond to new situations in the world by constantly reviewing its organization and functions. The prescription for reform is already shown in the Millennium Declaration. In order to achieve the goals contained in the Declaration and build a more peaceful, prosperous and just world, every Member State should renew its determination to achieve reform in the United Nations and take actions toward that end. Japan will make its utmost efforts to ensure that the United Nations is able to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Japan for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

**Address by The Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius.

*The Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President**: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency The Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Sir Anerood Jugnauth** (Mauritius): It gives me immense pleasure to address the fifty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly under your able leadership. Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to extend to you our wholehearted congratulations on your election as the President of the present session. I wish to assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation throughout your tenure of office.

I also wish to convey my thanks to His Excellency Dr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea for the remarkable manner in which he conducted the work of the Assembly's fifty-sixth session. United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan also deserves our gratitude for his inspiring and commendable initiatives in furthering the objectives of our Organization.

We are happy that the Swiss Confederation and Timor-Leste have joined us as the newest members of the United Nations family. Timor-Leste stands out as a shining accomplishment of the United Nations system to uphold the right to independence of a nation in adverse conditions.

The terrorist atrocities of 11 September will never fade from our collective consciousness, and the agony and the pain of the day are still with us. The sophisticated infrastructure of the terrorist organizations that was utilized to inflict that monstrosity must be dismantled at any cost. We owe it to ourselves and to the generations that will come after us to mobilize all our energies and efforts to never let that happen again, anywhere.

Mauritius is committed to remain fully engaged in the global coalition against terrorism, and we shall continue, together with other States, to take all measures — nationally, regionally and internationally — so that the scourge of terrorism is never inflicted on unsuspecting civilians and countries. We are alive to the chilling reality that no country is or ever will be safe until the war against terrorism is finally and completely won. We condemn cross-border infiltration; it must stop and must be made to stop.

The threats posed by international terrorism have heightened the need for collective action to preserve world peace and security. While we combine our efforts to wage a war on terrorism, we should, at the same time, continue to work towards global disarmament and a complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction within a specified time frame. My delegation reiterates its appeal for the early convening of a conference on nuclear disarmament.

The term of Mauritius as an elected non-permanent member of the Security Council will end in

December this year. During its tenure on the Council, Mauritius was instrumental in the establishment of an ad hoc working group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. It has made positive and constructive recommendations that have been endorsed by the Security Council.

In contrast to previous years, when the General Assembly listened to a litany of horror stories out of Africa, I am happy to note that substantial and positive developments are taking place on the continent. There is a new dawn in Africa and the stark realization that, without enduring peace and stability, there will be no sustainable development.

We congratulate the African leaders who have spared no effort in the search for African solutions to African conflicts and crises. The Pretoria Agreement between Presidents Kabila and Kagame represents a major breakthrough for the peace process in the Great Lakes region. We are aware that the implementation will be difficult. We are, however, confident that the international community will provide all necessary assistance to the leaders in the region for a smooth implementation.

With the positive developments in Angola, the successful general elections in Sierra Leone, the settlement of the boundary problem between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the progress made in the implementation of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, there are clear signals that some of the major conflicts in Africa are being successfully resolved.

As Africa embarks on the road of peace, we wish to underscore the crucial role played by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community in their relentless search for negotiated settlement of the conflicts in our respective subregions. There is cause for optimism, and it is gratifying that the days of doom and gloom for Africa are on their way to extinction.

Our region, the Indian Ocean, which has witnessed some turbulent times recently, is again poised for stability and development. We applaud the return to constitutional rule in the Comoros and the consolidation of democratic institutions in that country. We also welcome the formation of a Government of national reconciliation in Madagascar and the efforts under way to undo the damage caused by the recent crisis there. Mauritius will be closely associated with the countries of our region to further enhance regional cooperation.

The launching of the African Union in Durban, South Africa, in July this year was indeed a historic and emotionally charged occasion. The birth of the African Union heralds a new era of political, economic and social transformation for our continent. The continent is more than ever determined to shape its destiny and to tackle comprehensively the burning problems of poverty, hunger, disease and underdevelopment that have debilitated millions of Africans over the years. The African Union has raised expectations that we, as leaders, are committed to honour. The African Union will be able to respond in a positive manner to the challenges confronting it, as well as maximizing the opportunities for the improvement of the lives of peoples of the continent. In that context, the decision of African countries to take responsibility for peacekeeping on the continent needs to be encouraged. Since the burden of peacekeeping must be equitably shared, I am pleased to announce that Mauritius will contribute to the United Nations civilian police for service in post-conflict operations.

Along with the launching of the African Union, the home-grown New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is another chapter in the unfolding of the success story of the African continent. NEPAD commits Africa to building a strong and enduring culture of democracy, respect for human rights and accountability for the continent. Indeed, the African Peer Review Mechanism is a credible mechanism to promote the prospects of internationally recognized norms and standards of good governance.

The establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) marks a watershed in mankind's quest to put an end to impunity and to bring to justice those responsible for crimes against humanity, for genocide and for international crimes. The ICC is the single most important institution of this millennium, and it is the duty of the international community to fully support it.

In May this year, during the special session on children, Mauritius had the opportunity to join the international efforts to pave the way for effective protection for every child in every part of the world. The children who addressed the gathering uttered words of great significance that no one can, or should, ever forget. The future is theirs, and it is for them that

we ought to ensure the sustainable development of our one and only planet. My country will ensure that the principles, goals and actions discussed during the special session are integrated in our various child welfare programmes.

The Middle East is still not at peace. The death toll rises every day, but we are encouraged by the signals being sent by both the Israelis and the Palestinian leadership. Our vision of the Middle East is to see the early establishment of a Palestinian State living side by side with Israel on the basis of agreed and secure boundaries. The Palestinians also need to have State machinery that observes the fundamental norms of a democratic system, with responsibility and accountability on the part of the leaders. They alone have the absolute right to elect their leaders when elections are held in January 2003.

We appeal to the Iraqi authorities to comply fully and unconditionally with Security Council resolutions with respect to allowing the arms inspectors to fulfil their mandate.

Small island developing States are a particularly vulnerable group of countries by virtue of their inherent natural and structural constraints. The World Bank; the Commonwealth; the United Nations Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico; and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held recently in Johannesburg, South Africa, have all recognized that those constraints, if not addressed effectively, could undermine the trade and development prospects of these countries, leading to their further marginalization. We look forward to specific and concrete recommendations for action in this regard at the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization scheduled to be held next September in Mexico.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development addressed the fundamental question of what kind of world we want for ourselves and for generations that are yet unborn. The recent devastating floods in Europe and Asia, as well as the droughts in many parts of Africa — particularly Southern Africa, where there are more than 13 million people in danger of famine — are a stark reminder of the fragility of our planet's ecosystem. The World Summit on Sustainable Development has made the whole world conscious of the havoc that nature may cause unless drastic measures are taken immediately to redress the ecological imbalance.

(*spoke in French*)

The Ninth Summit of La Francophonie, which Lebanon will host next month and which will be held on the topic "dialogue of cultures", will undoubtedly enable the French-speaking community to foster sharing among various cultures with a view to maintaining peace, security and democracy.

(*spoke in English*)

Mauritius reaffirms its legitimate sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, including the island of Diego Garcia, which was detached from the territory of Mauritius by the United Kingdom prior to our independence. We renew our call to the former colonial Power, the United Kingdom, to accelerate discussions with us for an early settlement of this issue. The persons of Mauritian origin who were displaced from the Chagos Archipelago continue to claim redress for the serious human rights violations that they endured. We support their efforts to seek redress.

We also call on the French Government to work towards the resolution of the dispute concerning Tromelin Island, over which Mauritius has sovereignty.

In conclusion, Mauritius reiterates its conviction that the United Nations system remains the best guarantee for international peace and security.

The framework within which the United Nations organizes the collective security of States may not be perfect, but it is at least one that is tested and has served us relatively well for more than 50 years. Working on the basis of the neutrality of rules and principles is far preferable to the haphazardness of expediency. We also should not be unmindful of the linkages which exist between different situations, and that is why we urge the international community to observe the principle of equality of treatment in all cases.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius for the statement he has just made.

*The Right Honourable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Italian Republic**

**The President**: The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Italian Republic.

*Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Italian Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.*

**The President**: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Italian Republic, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

**Mr. Berlusconi** (Italy): One year has gone by since the terrorist attack on the United States, which inflicted such deep wounds on the city that welcomes us today. By striking this city, this nation, this democracy, the terrorists intended to strike at the heart of the whole community of nations and peoples that embraces the United Nations and the values for which it stands.

But they failed in their purpose. Instead, their barbarous acts roused in all of us a common will to respond. Rather than divide us, they united us. And united we intend to respond to every new threat to world security.

The fight against terrorism is the crucial challenge we must face today in order to defend human values — the values of freedom, peace, justice and development which we all share.

The United Nations is at the forefront of this struggle. We know that it will be a long and hard battle, and we must therefore maintain the cohesion and determination that we have shown so far.

But we are firmly convinced that this battle can be won. Yesterday President Bush recalled the responsibilities that we all share in this fight to defend freedom, which is the greatest good and that from which all other goods flow. Terrorism finds a breeding ground wherever there is no freedom, wherever there is no democracy, but where there is hunger, misery and despair.

In order to defeat terrorism, we must globalize freedom and democracy. In order to eradicate terrorism, we must promote an economic development without borders — a lasting development for all.

My country has played a role in this struggle from the start and will continue to do so to the end, enhancing the military, financial, judicial, police and intelligence cooperation that has already achieved important results. But we are also working to eradicate poverty and disease. We are committed to pledging 0.39 per cent of our gross domestic product to less developed countries, and we intend to reach the level of 0.7 per cent.

The African continent is crucial to our effort. It is a challenge to our conscience and represents a test of our ability to help its countries to participate in a true development without borders.

The Group of Eight's action plan for Africa, launched in Genoa under Italy's presidency and approved in Canada, responds to the need for a new form of solidarity between the most industrialized countries and those which intend to become the owners of their future.

But an increase in financial aid is no longer enough. At the Kananaskis summit, we presented an action plan aimed at achieving common standards of good governance, starting with our "e-government" initiative, a completely computerized and digitalized universal model of public accounting and of public administration and its primary functions.

The adoption of this universal model, which respects the identity, traditions and culture of each country, could produce several positive effects: clear and transparent public accounting; clear laws and regulations befitting the rule of law; more efficient services for citizens and businesses; greater efficiency in public administration; and, above all, greater democracy. This will spark a virtuous circle, and donor countries will finally have the certainty that their assistance is truly delivered to needy populations.

In this respect, three phases were outlined at the Group of Eight meeting. In the first trial stage, the necessary assistance will be provided to the countries that wish to adopt this system. At the end of this phase, which might last three or four years, we can move on to a second phase in which the adoption of the universal system becomes a requirement for all countries that apply for development assistance.

Finally, there could be a third phase in which we could ask the most industrialized countries to forge a

special partnership with specific countries, taking it upon themselves to implement specific projects.

We are likewise convinced that public assistance should be supplemented by private assistance. At Kananaskis, we submitted an innovative proposal called "de-tax", whereby private citizens would be able to allocate between 1 and 2 per cent of the price of what they buy to the implementation of specific projects, such as schools, hospitals or water-supply facilities in poor countries.

At Genoa we also launched the "Education for All" plan and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to which Italy has pledged a substantial contribution.

But the poorer countries also need to be relieved of the burden of their debt so as to free up the resources they need for their growth. That is why Italy has already cancelled $1 billion of debt and will soon cancel another $4 billion, until the complete write-off of all its credits.

Our commitment to the United Nations is clear on all fronts. Italy is the sixth-largest contributor to the Organization's regular budget and one of the largest troop contributors. About 10,000 Italian soldiers are deployed throughout the world, from the Balkans to Afghanistan, to preserve and maintain peace and security. We will continue along that road, in our firm belief that there is no problem that we cannot solve if we are united in our determination.

As we speak today, the main challenge to the United Nations and our system of values is posed by the regime that governs Iraq, which has systematically ignored all the resolutions of the United Nations. A response is indispensable to safeguard the international community from the danger posed by a massive build-up of weapons of mass destruction.

As President Bush so clearly stated, what we must address today is precisely this repeated defiance of the United Nations and of the will of the international community. We must make use of all the diplomatic and political means available to address this situation. But if things do not change substantially, it will be necessary to act within the framework of the United Nations in order to safeguard global security from a real threat.

The lesson we must draw from the events of 11 September is that haste can lead to carelessness, but delay in taking the necessary action can have terrible consequences. When terrorist attacks or threats to peace are carried out by networks or regimes that aim at destroying our way of life and our liberal democracies, then democracies have not only the right but also the duty to defend themselves.

Let me now turn our attention to the Middle East. Italy supports the road map drawn up by the European Union, as well as the action of the "quartet" and the rapid convening of an international conference to ensure the peaceful coexistence of two independent States within safe and secure borders.

First of all, the spiral of violence must come to an end through the cessation of terrorist attacks. The holding of free and fair elections will advance the process of democratic reform of the Palestinian National Authority. But a lasting peace cannot be envisaged unless we narrow the economic gap between the Israelis and the Palestinians, giving the Palestinians realistic hope for jobs and development. With this goal in mind, Italy has presented a plan to rebuild and support the Palestinian economy. Italy has already offered to host the negotiations and the peace conference.

We are men and women of peace. We are convinced that this new century cannot be left at the mercy of criminal folly and fanaticism. We are committed to the fight against terrorism, and we will do everything in our power to eradicate that evil and to defend our security and our future. We will lend our efforts to the building of a true and just peace, the only kind of peace for the just and the free.

**The President**: On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the Prime Minister of the Italian Republic for the statement he has just made.

*Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Italian Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.*

**The President**: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia.

**Mr. Downer** (Australia): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. I am also pleased to welcome Switzerland as a new Member of the United Nations.

Let me acknowledge also two other significant developments: the establishment of the African Union, and the creation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Both raise real hope for a new era of political stability and economic growth for Africa.

We meet at this General Assembly in the shadow of the terrorist attacks on this great city one year ago. Those chilling events were an attack on the values of the great civilizations represented here today, values that are central to the United Nations Charter and this Organization.

We can take some comfort in knowing that the international community has responded, deliberately and resolutely, to international terrorism. The coalition in the war against terrorism — led by the United States and joined by others, including Australia — has accomplished a great deal. The Al Qaeda network in Afghanistan has been disabled. The Taliban regime has been defeated. Now the world is a safer and more humane place.

But terrorism cannot be stamped out by military effort alone. Together we must choke off support — financial and otherwise — for terrorism. We must stop the patrons and bankrollers of the trade in terror, and together face this insidious threat. The decisive response of the United Nations after 11 September, embodied in Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), created a framework for Member States to join forces in suppressing, prosecuting and punishing terrorist acts and terrorist financing.

All Member States must implement the commitments made in resolution 1373 (2001). Australia has strengthened its counter-terrorism legislative and law enforcement framework. We are party to 10 of the 12 anti-terrorism instruments and will ratify another later this month. Australia is also assisting other countries in the Asia-Pacific region to implement their obligations.

We face another grave threat to international peace and security, one that tests the very authority of the United Nations. For over a decade, Iraq has flouted legally binding obligations to disclose and eradicate its programmes for weapons of mass destruction. Iraq has defied United Nations resolutions, United Nations inspections and United Nations sanctions, and it has ignored some 23 of the 27 United Nations obligations imposed on it under 16 Security Council resolutions. The Secretary-General has been patient, flexible and assiduous in his efforts to get Iraq to comply with Council resolutions. But Iraq has refused to work with the United Nations in efforts to dismantle its programmes for weapons of mass destruction.

Until this occurs, Iraq is a grave threat to its neighbours and to the world. Iraq's well documented aggression towards its neighbours and its past use of chemical weapons underline the potency of the threat it poses. Grave concerns remain about Iraq's present capabilities.

Up until 1998 United Nations weapons inspectors did much good work in finding and destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program. But the work of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) was never finished, because in 1998 the inspectors were effectively thrown out of Iraq. Four years later, there is little doubt that Iraq has been working hard to rebuild its chemical and biological weapons programmes. Moreover, serious questions also remain about Iraq's nuclear weapons programme.

This state of affairs cannot be left unresolved. Iraq must give immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to inspectors to all areas, facilities, equipment, records and Iraqi officials. In short, Iraq must fulfil the requirements of all relevant Security Council resolutions. If Iraq has nothing to hide, then it has nothing to fear. Indeed, by meeting these demands, Iraq and its people have everything to gain.

Let us also be very clear: Iraq's flagrant and persistent defiance is a direct challenge to the United Nations, to the authority of the Security Council, to international law, and to the will of the international community.

We cannot stand by and allow ourselves to be ignored. Nor must protracted negotiations be allowed to weaken and eventually paralyse efforts to allay fears about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. We all must demonstrate a clear, collective determination to uphold the authority of the Security Council, and to ensure that its resolutions on Iraq are implemented in full. Otherwise, if Iraq's pursuit of these abhorrent weapons is allowed to continue, we may shortly be asking ourselves why we failed to act.

The terrorist threat has given new urgency to our disarmament and non-proliferation goals, and puts demands on us for a renewed effort to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction — both to non-state

and state actors. We have to be alive to the willingness of terrorist groups to develop and use chemical, biological or nuclear weapons.

Australia, for its part, intends to pursue practical and effective measures through international non-proliferation treaty regimes and export-control arrangements. These regimes and arrangements have delivered tangible security benefits, and should be supported strongly.

We also need to deal with other transnational challenges: not just terrorism but other transnational crimes, including the smuggling of arms, drugs and people.

Transnational crimes threaten all countries. They require us to cooperate further in law enforcement, intelligence and financial controls — much like the war on terrorism.

People-smuggling and trafficking, in particular, are a truly transnational problem. This lucrative criminal enterprise undermines the international refugee protection system, and legal migration programs, that have enabled millions to build new and prosperous lives in countries like Australia. Combating people-smuggling and trafficking in persons is particularly important to Australia and to the Asia-Pacific region. This year, Australia co-hosted a regional ministerial conference with Indonesia. Ministers from thirty-eight countries committed themselves to stopping the people who deal cold-heartedly in human cargo. We agreed that, in the first instance, people-smuggling must be legislated against as a serious crime. There is much more we need to do, and Australia welcomes international discussion and action on the issue, including within the United Nations system itself.

Australia welcomes the addition of the International Criminal Court to the international legal framework. It is an example of positive international cooperation which will complement the efforts of States to end impunity for the worst violations of international humanitarian law.

United Nations work in East Timor is another outstanding example of how the organization can, and does, make a difference — in this case in response to a humanitarian crisis. In May we celebrated East Timor's independence. We are now about to welcome East Timor as a new member of the United Nations. That we have arrived at this point owes much to the resolve and courage of the East Timorese. It owes much also to the United Nations and United Nations authorized missions that brought stability and order and renewed hope for the future.

I congratulate the Secretary-General and the Security Council for providing the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) with the necessary support, not just for peacekeeping and policing, but also for developing stable governance in East Timor. Sustained United Nations and international support will be critical in East Timor's formative years. Australia is determined to provide such support. I would like to pay tribute to Sergio Vieira de Mello's efforts in East Timor, and to congratulate him warmly on his appointment as United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

HIV/AIDS is a global issue that tears at the fabric of our society, and threatens the economic development of entire continents. The United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS in June last year brought home to Member States their responsibilities to marshal national and regional responses to HIV/AIDS. Australia hosted a regional ministerial meeting in Melbourne in October 2001. Ministers agreed on the need to develop strategies to fight HIV/AIDS, and on the need to share lessons and cooperate in priority areas. We helped establish the Asia-Pacific Leadership Forum on HIV/AIDS and Development to engender greater cooperation in the region, and we applaud the appointment of a United Nations regional envoy for HIV/AIDS.

The United Nations has a heavy agenda. But it cannot — and should not — try to do everything. To make a difference it must be selective and focused, matching its activities to its capabilities and to the priorities that we, the Member States, set for it. The Millennium Declaration gave us clear, agreed priorities. And the Monterrey Financing for Development Conference and the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development have built on these, giving us a framework to shape and direct our work. We also need to revitalize and reform the way in which the key organs of the Organization — the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Security Council — function. The Security Council, in particular, should be reformed, including by expanding its membership.

We also need to think again about the relationship between these organs and the Secretariat: time is not a free good, nor are meeting services, nor are the Secretary-General's reports, and nor is the capacity or will of Member States to provide resources without limits. We need to look at how we can more effectively use existing Unite Nations mechanisms — particularly the General Assembly and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) — as bodies of review. And we are especially concerned that major United Nations conferences have become so large and unwieldy that their fundamental purposes have been obscured.

Australia strongly supports the process of reform proposed by the Secretary-General for his second term. This provides a unique opportunity to address these questions and to "re-tool" the Organization so as to build on its strengths. As Member States, we are the United Nations. The Organization is there to serve our collective interests.

In order to address new threats and challenges, the United Nations must be focused and responsive, and its key organs must function efficiently and effectively. We must continue to work together to enable it to meet our expectations. I am confident that — together — we can achieve success.

**The President**: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss, the Federal Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Switzerland.

**Mr. Deiss** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): It is imperative, now more than ever before, that all the peoples of the world act in a spirit of solidarity. The United Nations embodies this spirit. In joining the United Nations, Switzerland sends you a message of solidarity. This makes me proud and happy.

I would like to add my thanks to those expressed last Tuesday by Kaspar Villiger, the President of the Swiss Confederation, on the occasion of Switzerland's formal admission to the United Nations. I would also like to thank all the Members of the United Nations for the warm welcome they have given my country. Switzerland feels welcomed. We feel that we are where we belong.

I would also like to give Secretary-General Kofi Annan my profound thanks. His sincerity and wisdom contributed greatly to convincing the people of Switzerland of the need to join the United Nations.

I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election. I already know and value your qualities and talents and I know that you will put them to the best service of the United Nations. Switzerland is pleased to be working with you towards the success of this session of the General Assembly.

The Swiss people have decided to join the United Nations. They have said "yes" to increased cooperation with the United Nations. They have said "yes" to a stronger international commitment. They have said "yes" to taking greater responsibility for meeting the challenges that face humankind.

The challenges facing the international community at the beginning of the twenty-first century are immense. A number of regions suffer from terrible poverty. Crises and wars are rife on all continents. There are millions of refugees. We see the hideous face of terrorism. Criminal networks exploit human beings and traffic shamefully in drugs and arms. New diseases are emerging and, day after day, we continue to destroy the Earth's ecological balance.

There are no simple answers to any of these problems, but there is a place where we can all meet to find solutions: the United Nations. The world needs a strong United Nations, as it is the only universal Organization working at the global level. It alone can analyse problems at the world level. It alone can create a consensus between States on common goals. Finally, as stressed by the Secretary-General, there is no substitute for the unique international legitimacy provided to principles and choices of action by the United Nations.

Switzerland has joined the United Nations as a neutral country and we intend to remain neutral. Our neutral status, however, in no way diminishes our desire for cooperation. On the contrary, it is an advantage for our peace activities. Our membership of the United Nations is not a change in direction, but the logical consequence of our foreign policy.

To quote our Constitution, "the Swiss Confederation is committed ... to a just and peaceful international order". The principal aim of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security. For us, therefore, the United Nations is the ideal place to carry out this vital mission. As a Member of the United Nations, Switzerland will devote itself resolutely to international peace and security. That commitment will be focused, above all, on armed

conflicts. The logic of armed conflicts today forces us to adopt a multidimensional approach to peace processes. If we are to succeed, we must work in several different areas in parallel: military, diplomatic, humanitarian and economic. We must also involve all interested players in the process. All this demands a major effort of coordination, and Switzerland will contribute to that.

Security problems, moreover, must be addressed from a broader angle — that of human security. The inhabitants of this world must be able to live without fear of war, starvation and despotism. In particular, we must protect vulnerable individuals and groups. Switzerland will therefore pursue its efforts in favour of human security. This includes stopping the recruitment of child soldiers, eliminating anti-personnel mines and halting the proliferation of small arms.

In this context, I welcome the Secretary-General's appeal to make full use of multilateral institutions. This is especially valid for the maintenance of international peace and security. There is only one source of legitimacy for the use of force: the United Nations.

Iraq has been discussed on several occasions during these past days. There is undeniably a need to act, and to act with determination, in order to ensure the implementation of United Nations resolutions, but action must be taken together, within the United Nations. Only the United Nations can confer international legitimacy to any action against Iraq.

Switzerland is convinced that peace and development can be sustained only if they go hand in hand with freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights. Human dignity is our most precious asset. It must be defended at all times and in all places. We will champion this conviction at the United Nations to the full and without concessions. For as long as men and women are exploited, children are mistreated and the death penalty is carried out, Switzerland will do everything within its power to defend human dignity.

At the General Assembly this year, we will strive in particular to promote the adoption of the draft optional protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. This protocol is needed to give better protection to people in detention against torture and mistreatment. That is why we have been supporting this initiative for years.

In its capacity as the Depositary State, Switzerland feels a special responsibility to promote awareness of and respect for the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. At the United Nations, we will continue tirelessly to defend these instruments. In this area, Switzerland has submitted to a number of countries involved in the Middle East conflict a proposal which aims to ensure the better implementation of international humanitarian law. We advocate two mechanisms: one for promoting dialogue to allow the parties to settle problems concerning the application of international humanitarian law; the second, a mechanism to monitor respect for humanitarian law.

We are also convinced that the International Criminal Court will ensure the better application of international humanitarian law. This new Court is an essential tool for dealing with serious violations of the fundamental human freedoms. We will therefore remain on our guard to ensure that it can function efficiently and we will pursue our efforts to convince those States that have not yet signed the Rome Statute of the need for such a Court.

Two days ago, we commemorated the tragic events that shook the United States and the world one year ago. The causes of terrorism must be eradicated. I am thinking, inter alia, of injustice, disregard for the rights of minorities, and poverty. That is one of the objectives of our development cooperation and of our human rights policy.

Sustainable development and the elimination of poverty remain mankind's main challenges today. We saw that again at Johannesburg. They are global challenges that require a global strategy and global solidarity. In other words, they require coordinated action by the United Nations institutions, as well as greater cooperation between the United Nations, the development banks, civil society and the private sector. Development cooperation must be coordinated. Switzerland will contribute to strengthening the coordination efforts vital to ensuring that our activities enjoy the success they merit.

The struggle against poverty also requires greater exchange of expertise and better transfer of technology. Switzerland is closely involved in the preparation of the World Summit on the Information Society, the first

phase of which will take place in Geneva in 2003. The main challenge of that Summit is the very gap between North and South in terms of access to new information technologies. Therefore, I call on all to contribute actively to the success of that conference.

These thoughts lead me to refer to Geneva, the international city that is a close and longstanding link between my country and the United Nations. Switzerland is proud and grateful to be able to host the European Headquarters of the United Nations and many specialized agencies. Geneva is the main international hub of disarmament, humanitarian aid, social development, the promotion of human rights and environmental protection. That gives me great pleasure, because Swiss citizens are particularly concerned about these issues. However, that also involves the special responsibility of offering international organizations optimum working and living conditions. You can also count on Switzerland in that area.

Before Switzerland became a Member, the United Nations was already a universal Organization, but with Switzerland — and soon Timor-Leste — the United Nations will be even more universal. The United Nations is the greatest world forum. Switzerland will provide it its full support in the interests of humanity and the interests of we, the peoples of the United Nations.

*The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.*